Talks on Meditation given in the Blue Mountains

Venerable
Chanmyay Sayadaw

The Blue Mountain Talks

Venerable Chanmyay Sayadaw

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Foreword

In 1998, Chanmyay Sayadaw (Ashin Janakabhivaṃsa) was at the Blue Mountains Insight Meditation Centre (BMIMC, Australia) conducting a *vipassanā* meditation retreat. The talks were recorded and later Nancy, Chittapala, and John transcribed the talks with the aim of publishing them as a book. John had put these talks on the website of the BMIMC and later also helped with digitising the corrections.

After lying dormant for many years, this project has been taken up again in April of this year. Nancy has painstakingly done all the changes that were necessary after I checked the transcriptions by listening to all the talks. In August, I was able to clarify some unclear passages with Chanmyay Sayadaw and also discussed a few editorial issues with him.

"Talks on Meditation Given in the Blue Mountains" is a collection of Dhamma talks that were aimed at a group of meditators. They contain the basic instructions for the practice of vipassanā meditation as well as encouraging and inspiring expositions on topics relevant to the practice of mindfulness meditation.

As reader of this book, you will be directly addressed and receive Sayadaw's practical instructions and profound explanations. Of course, the aim of these teachings is to put them into actual practice. The Buddha said that only a person who actually practises meditation can be considered a Dhammavihārī, one who lives by the Dhamma.

Therefore, it is our heartfelt wish that you implement these

teachings into your meditation practice and life so that you become a true Dhammavihārī.

Ven. Ariya Ñāṇī
Forest Refuge (USA)
October 2010

Practical Vipassanā Meditation

When one wants to meditate, practising either *samatha* meditation or *vipassanā* meditation, it is necessary to purify one's morality by observing at least the five precepts. The purification of morality is an important basis for meditation because it is conducive to concentration as well as insight. It is better to observe eight precepts, so that there is more time to spend on meditation, for if only five precepts are observed, time must be given to preparing dinner and so on.

There are three types of training in Buddhism. One is training in *sīla* or morality, known as *sīlasikkhā*, accomplished by observing the eight precepts during the meditation retreat. The second is training in concentration, known as *samādhisikkhā*. The third is training in wisdom, insight, or enlightenment, known as *paññāsikkhā*. Of these three types of *sikkhā* or training, *sīlasikkhā* is the basic requirement for a person who wants to train his or her mind and gain concentration as well as insight or wisdom.

Sīla here means restraint of deeds and speech. When one's deeds and speech are purified by observing eight precepts, morality is purified. In Buddhism, we speak of *kāyakamma*, meaning bodily action, *vacīkamma*, verbal action, and *manokamma*, mental action. *Mano* means mind or mental, *kamma* means action or deed. By observing eight precepts, *kāyakamma* and *vacīkamma*

are purified through the restraint of unwholesome deeds and speech.

However, a person cannot purify his or her mind by observing the precepts, but only through meditation, either *samatha* or *vipassanā* meditation. When one's deeds and speech are purified, one is happy because one has a clear conscience. If deeds and speech are not purified, a meditator may feel guilty or unhappy, the mind is not clear, and one is unable to concentrate well on the object of meditation. A clear and happy mind helps the meditator attain a degree of deep concentration and clear insight into phenomena.

Thus the eight precepts are taken as a basic requirement for meditation practice. The conscience is clear as morality is purified by observing the precepts, and this clear conscience is conducive to concentration as well as insight. So *samatha* or *vipassanā* meditation can be practised on the basis of the purification of morality, known as *sīla visuddhi*, the first of seven kinds of *visuddhi*. When *sīla* or morality is purified, then the meditator can begin to purify the mind by concentrating well on the meditation object and attaining clear insight into mental and physical phenomena.

We are here to practise *vipassanā* meditation based on this purification of morality and not *samatha* meditation. At this place we should know a little about the difference between *samatha* and *vipassanā* meditation. *samatha* meditation means concentration meditation, practised with the aim of deep concentration of the mind only. *vipassanā* meditation is practised to attain the cessation of suffering, *Nibbāna*, through the realisation of mental and physical phenomena in their true nature based on some degree of concentration.

We practise *vipassanā* meditation to realise the true nature of mental and physical phenomena and to destroy all defiled and negative mental states, that is to attain the cessation of suffering. Though we are able to attain deep concentration of mind through *samatha* meditation, we can't attain the cessation of suffering if we are not able to realise any mental and physical phenomena.

Vipassanā meditation aims at the realisation of impermanence, suffering or unsatisfactoriness, and not-self or non-ego of all mental and physical phenomena. These are called the three general characteristics of existence: *anicca*, *dukkha*, and *anattā*. They are found in all mental states and physical processes. Only when the meditators realise these three characteristics of mental and physical phenomena, will they be able to remove the mental defilements which are the cause of suffering.

Vipassanā roughly translates as "insight", which can be attained by bare attention to what is happening in the body and mind. If insight practice is mixed with intellectual thinking or philosophical reasoning, it will not penetrate into the true nature of the body-mind process. The meditator will not be able to destroy any of the mental defilements. To develop insight knowledge by means of *vipassanā* meditation you should neither think about the technique nor analyse or conceptualise the object, but see it as it really occurs.

That is why the Buddha said, "*Bhūtam bhūtato passati*", meaning "see a thing as it is". We have to be mindful of a thing as it occurs. This is right understanding (*sammā diṭṭhi* in Pāḷi), seeing any mental phenomenon or physical process as it really occurs. That leads to insight knowledge, *vipassanā ñāṇa*.

Vipassanā meditation has many varieties of mental states and physical processes as objects of meditation. Any mental state or physical process has the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and selflessness. Every mental state arises and immediately passes away, not lasting a millionth of a second.

The Buddha said, "*Yad aniccaṃ taṃ dukkhaṃ*". This means, "What is impermanent is suffering". Then we see the nature of not-self or non-ego. The so-called self, ego, or soul is understood as a lasting entity. But none of the mental states or physical processes are everlasting. They are not-self, not a person, not a being, or not a soul. They are *anattā*.

As any mental state or physical process can become the object of *vipassanā* meditation the beginner may be puzzled about what

to be mindful of. To avoid that difficulty at the beginning of the practice, the late Venerable Mahāsi Sayadaw taught his students to follow the rise and fall of the abdomen. On breathing in, the abdomen rises and on breathing out, the abdomen falls. When the abdomen rises, observe it and make a mental note as "rising", and when the abdomen falls, observe it and note it as "falling". In this way, observe it as "rising, falling".

However, the abdomen moves in many ways, sometimes outwards and inwards, sometimes upwards and downwards, or sometimes it moves around depending on the meditator's physical constitution. If it moves upwards or outwards, note it as "rising" and if it moves downwards or inwards, note it as "falling". Note "rising, falling" in this way, precisely and attentively. The words "rising" and "falling" are not absolute reality but concepts, which help the mind stay focused on the movement of the object. The mind should not stay with the words but should be with the physical movements of the abdomen.

At the beginning of the practice, the abdominal movement may not be distinct enough to be observed. To make it distinct the meditator may breathe somewhat vigorously or quickly. This should not be done. Breathing must be normal and natural, thereby trying to observe the movement as much as possible. Gradually as the mind becomes concentrated on the abdominal movement, it will become more evident and prominent and then the meditator can concentrate on it easily.

If you hear a sound during the contemplation of the rising and falling movement, note it as "hearing, hearing". You have to observe the consciousness of hearing which includes the object (the sound), noting it as "hearing, hearing" about four or five times before returning to the abdominal movement. In the beginning, the mind may not stay with the abdominal movement. No matter how hard the meditator tries to concentrate, the mind goes out very often, wandering off and thinking about something else. When it does so, do not bring the mind back to the primary object, the rising and falling movement. Instead, observe the mind

which is wandering, thinking, or imagining, making a mental note such as "wandering, wandering", "thinking, thinking", "imagining, imagining", and so on, until the wandering has stopped. Then bring the mind back to the primary object.

We need to observe this wandering mind because the aim of mindfulness meditation is to observe whatever occurs in body and mind as it really is. In the chapter on mindfulness of consciousness contained in the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, the Buddha said, "*Vikkhittaṃ vā cittaṃ vikkhittaṃ cittan'ti pajānāti*". It means, "When the mind wanders, observe it as it is". We have to be mindful of wandering, thinking, or imagining, because these are mental states known as *nāma*. Mental phenomena have the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and selflessness. To realise the impermanent, suffering, and selfless nature of wandering thoughts we have to be mindful of them as they are.

This is *vipassanā* meditation. In *samatha* meditation, whenever the mind goes out, we bring the mind back to focus on the primary object because the purpose of *samatha* meditation is to concentrate the mind very deeply on a single object of meditation. In *vipassanā* meditation, we do not do so as insight does not require such a deep concentration, but requires realisation of the three characteristics of mental and physical phenomena. To realise these characteristics the meditator needs some degree of concentration which is obtained by observing each mental state or physical process arising from moment to moment.

In *vipassanā* meditation, the meditator has to focus his or her mind on successive objects, one after another. If each object is observed attentively enough, the mind is concentrated on the first object and following objects, too. In this way, the meditator attains a degree of concentration enabling him or her to realise the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and selflessness of phenomena.

Let me repeat: when the mind wanders and thinks about something else, do not bring it back to the primary object but rather observe that wandering mind as it occurs until the thought

has disappeared. Only then return to the primary object and note it as "rising" and "falling". When you note any wandering mind, thinking, or imagining, the noting should be more powerful, energetic, and attentive to the process of the wandering thought, noting it as "wandering wandering", "thinking, thinking", or "imagining, imagining". As the noting mind becomes more powerful it overwhelms the thinking process which gradually ceases. After the disappearance of the thought the noting mind will return to the primary object.

While contemplating the rising and falling movement of the abdomen, unpleasant physical sensations may arise such as pain, stiffening, itching, or numbness. Then you should leave the primary object and go to the point of pain, stiffening, itching, or numbness and observe it as it is, making a mental note as "pain, pain", "stiffening, stiffening", "itching, itching", or "numb, numb", noting it intently until the unpleasant sensation disappears or subsides.

When noted intently, most of the time pain or itching seems to become more severe because the mind becomes more concentrated and thus more sensitive to the pain. Wherever the pain is in the body, be patient with it and continue to observe it as much as possible. First of all, note the pain attentively and energetically, and if it subsides or disappears, return to the primary object. If the pain increases so that it is no longer bearable, then it is time to get up and practise walking meditation for about one hour. Avoid changing the posture just to relieve the pain since this becomes a bad habit. Otherwise later on with more experience in meditation even if there is no pain, the mind tends to want to change the posture of the body.

In the sitting, be relaxed in mind and body and do not let the mind or body become tense. Keep the head and body in an upright position, not leaning forward or backward. The upright posture will slump when effort is weak. When this is happening, slowly straighten the body, noting it as "straightening, straightening".

When the body has returned to its upright posture, return to note the abdominal movement.

Some meditators sit in a cross-legged posture, but this should be avoided because those not used to this posture will quickly feel painful sensations as one leg presses on the other. Instead of crossing the legs, place them side by side evenly, one leg besides the other. Without pressure on the legs, there may be no pain for some time. However, after some time there may be tension in the knee, then this tension should be observed.

The purpose of walking meditation is to realise each movement of the foot very well. The movement of the foot is *vāyodhātu* (the wind element), but it also has the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and not-self. When walking, look at a place about six or seven feet ahead without looking here or there. Note one step at a time, "left, right, left, right". When taking a left step, observe the movement of the left foot, and when taking a right step, observe the movement of the right foot, making a mental note as "left, right, left, right". Do not look nearer than six feet since in a short time this would create tension in the neck or back, or dizziness. The eyes should be about half closed. When placing the foot, put it down flat, not the heel first and the toes later as normally. To make the foot drop flat, keep the steps short about one foot apart with steps not too close together since this is unnatural and may cause loss of balance.

Once the movement of the right and left foot can be noted to a certain degree, increase the number of objects observed. Note the lifting of the heel as "lifting", pushing the foot forward as "pushing", and putting it down as "putting" or "dropping". In this way, note "lifting, pushing, dropping". When you lift the heel of the foot, you note it as "lifting" by being aware of the movement of the heel, and when you push it forward, you observe the actual movement of the pushing forward of the foot making a mental note as "pushing". When you drop it, observe the actual movement of dropping and note it as "dropping".

Later on, increase your objects by noting "lifting, pushing,

dropping, touching, pressing", and so on. But for the time being, that is for the first three days, you should note "left, right" for about ten minutes. After that, continue to note "lifting, pushing, dropping". Determine in your mind not to look around when practising walking meditation, keeping the eyes ahead all the time. When a tendency or desire to look around arises, that tendency or desire must be noted as "tendency, tendency" or "desire, desire" until it disappears. As a result, there will be no looking around and concentration will not be broken.

On reaching the other end of the walk, stand still and note the posture as "standing, standing" about ten times, while being aware of the upright posture of the body. After that, there is the desire or intention to turn the body and this intention must be noted as "intending, intending". Then turn the body very slowly, with attention to each individual movement of turning, noting it as "turning, turning". Though it is possible to observe either the foot or body when turning, it is better to observe the turning movement of the body and to observe the foot whilst walking. When facing the opposite direction, stand still and again observe the standing posture, the upright posture of the body, by noting it as "standing, standing" about ten times.

In this way, walk for one hour being well aware of each individual movement. Do not let the mind stay with just the words "lifting, pushing, dropping". The mind should go to the actual movement of the foot, the phenomenon to be observed.

The duration of walking and sitting need not be equal. In the beginning of the practice, generally walk for one hour and sit for one hour. If it is possible to sit longer, then do so; let's say for 70 or 75 minutes. If you have a painful sensation after 30 minutes of sitting, observe it as "pain, pain", while being patient with it. If the pain becomes unbearable and it is necessary to change the posture, do so once only in the hour of sitting, no more. Later on it will no longer be necessary to change the posture in a sitting.

When you walk to the sitting place, maintain mindfulness until you have taken your seat by observing "lifting, pushing,

dropping, lifting, pushing, dropping" without interruption. On reaching the mat, observe all actions and movements involved in the act of sitting down as they occur. This is a description of walking meditation in brief.

We have three aspects of practice: walking, sitting, and awareness of daily activities. Awareness of daily activities is very important in making progress in meditation. Whatever activity the meditator is doing that activity must be observed; let's say bending or stretching the arms, lifting, pushing, and dropping the foot, holding the spoon in eating, looking at the food, and so on. Whatever actions or movements are performed in your daily routine they must be observed so that there is a continuity of mindfulness for the whole day as much as possible. Continuous and sustained mindfulness is the cause of deep concentration. Deep concentration enables the meditator to realise the three characteristics of mental and physical phenomena.

This has been an introductory talk on the practical aspects of *vipassanā* meditation. May you all be able to rightly understand the technique of this mindfulness meditation, strive earnestly, and attain the cessation of suffering!

Walking Meditation and Daily Activities

We have three aspects of our practice: sitting, walking, and daily activities. All three are equally important in gaining deep concentration and attaining clear insight into phenomena. But the most important factor in making progress in *vipassanā* meditation is the noting of consciousness or mental states. Meditation is training of the mind, mental development, or mental culture, so therefore, observe and note each and every thought.

The second important factor is awareness of activities in our daily routine because much of the time we perform repeated actions and movements. If we do not observe these routine activities in detail, there will be many gaps between one moment of mindfulness and the next. When there is no continuous attentiveness, then concentration weakens.

Now, I want to deal with some points of walking meditation. In the walking meditation, for about the first ten minutes, note "left, right, left, right" while observing each step very attentively and precisely. Thereafter, observe three parts of the step, the movements of lifting, pushing, and dropping the foot. When lifting the foot, observe the lifting movement and at that same moment make a mental note as "lifting".

When pushing the foot forward, observe the pushing movement and note it as "pushing", and as the foot drops, observe the

dropping movement attentively and precisely and at the same time make a mental note as "dropping".

Sometimes the mind stays with the word or mental labelling and does not go to the actual movement of the foot. This is not correct since the aim is to perceive the actual movement of the foot. Labelling or mental noting helps the mind focus on the object precisely and follow it closely. The noting mind should see the movement of the foot and at the same time label it as "lifting, pushing, dropping". In this way, walk slowly and observe "lifting, pushing, dropping" for about thirty minutes.

For some meditators the labelling or mental noting sometimes hinders their awareness of the object in which case they should just be aware of the actual movement of lifting, pushing, and dropping. Without labelling or mental noting, however, the meditator may not be attentive enough, so awareness is shallow and superficial. The mind doesn't grip the object, but often goes out and wanders. Then more effort must be put into observing the movement of the foot, so that awareness becomes attentive and deep. If it is possible to label the object, do so, but being aware of the object is the most important thing.

After some thirty minutes, begin to note the intention before lifting. An intention precedes every movement and it is intention that causes the foot to lift, push forward, and drop. There is an intention before lifting, before pushing forward, and before dropping. First of all, observe or note only the intention before lifting. In this way, note "intending, lifting, pushing, dropping" for about twenty minutes in one hour of walking.

At the beginning of the practice, the walking meditation is better than sitting, because the object of meditation, the movement of the foot, is very distinct to the mind and it is possible to observe objects closely and precisely. For this reason every sitting meditation should be preceded by walking meditation so that a degree of deep concentration is attained.

That concentration gained in the walking meditation should be maintained in the process of settling down for sitting medi-

tation. When walking to the meditation seat, continue to note each movement of the foot as "lifting, pushing, dropping" or as "intending, lifting, pushing, dropping". When the seat is reached, note "standing, standing" and when you intend to sit, note it as "intending, intending, intending". Then sit down very slowly so that is possible to observe the individual movements of changing the posture by noting them as "sitting, sitting, sitting". As the body bends, note it as "bending, bending", and when the body touches the floor or the seat, note it as "touching, touching". When arranging the clothes, legs, or hands, note it as "arranging, arranging", observing all actions just as they occur. Then there will be good concentration in that sitting with few wandering thoughts.

In the same way, when finishing sitting meditation and getting up to walk, then again at that time carry over the concentration gained in the sitting until the walking path is reached by being aware of each movement of the foot as "lifting, pushing, dropping" or "left, right, left, right".

At the beginning of every walking meditation first observe "left, right, left, right" for about five or ten minutes so that the body's circulation is restored. Because in the sitting meditation it had been slowed down. Only then note three or four parts, that is "lifting, pushing, dropping" and then "intending, lifting, pushing, dropping".

When meditators are experienced in the practice, they want to note more objects in the walking such as "intending, lifting, pushing, dropping, touching, pressing". When dropping the foot to touch the floor or carpet, observe it as "touching". But to ensure that the touching sensations are distinct, put the foot down flat, not the heel first and the toes later. Sometimes on attaining deep concentration in the walking by placing the foot in this way, meditators may experience something on the sole. So meditators can increase the objects noted, in this way they can note "intending, lifting, pushing, dropping, touching, pressing", "intending, lifting, pushing, dropping, touching, pressing". It is

also possible to note one movement twice as "lifting, lifting", "pushing, pushing", "dropping, dropping", "touching, touching", "pressing, pressing". One can also divide the lifting of the foot into two parts. On lifting the heel, observe it as "lifting" and on raising the toes, note it as "raising". In this way, observe it as "lifting, raising, pushing, dropping, touching, pressing".

After practising in this way for about four or five days, it may be possible to note the intention before every movement, thus "intending, lifting", "intending, raising", "intending, pushing", "intending, dropping", "touching", "intending, pressing". However, before touching there is no intention, just "touching". When you are about to lift the back foot, press the front foot a little bit, noting at that time as "intending, pressing", "intending, lifting", "intending, raising", "intending, pushing", "intending, dropping", "touching", "intending, pressing", and so on.

Meditators will know themselves whether they are able to concentrate the mind on such detailed movements of the foot. If the noting can be done easily and comfortably, they should continue this way. But if it is a strain to observe more objects, they should return to the usual number of objects. For the time being, most meditators will be able to observe not more than three or four parts, meaning "lifting, pushing, dropping" or "intending, lifting, pushing, dropping".

It is very important to note the intentions before the movement of the foot and before all actions and movements in the daily routine. Every physical action and movement is preceded by intention, but only by slowing down all actions and movements is it possible to catch and note this intention. Also in daily activities, for example, when you are about to stretch the arm, note the intention to stretch as "intending", and then note "stretching, stretching, stretching" as the movement is slowly performed. Likewise when you experience an itching sensation on the head while sitting. Though the sensation is noted as "itching, itching, itching" it may not subside but become unbearably irritating, so the meditator may want to scratch. This may be done, but

mindfully! Wanting to move the arm, there is an intention. So note "intending, intending", then slowly, very slowly, lift the arm, noting it as "lifting, lifting, lifting". When the hand reaches the itching point, note it as "touching, touching", then "intending to scratch", and then "scratching, scratching". When the itching has gone, note the wish to put the hand down as "intending, intending", then "lowering, lowering", and so on.

Whatever is done must be done very slowly while observing every individual movement of the action. These movements are *vāyodhātu*, the wind or air element, which must be thoroughly realised as it is. It is a material unit and is experienced as motion or vibration. This movement has also the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and selflessness. By being aware of the individual movements of the stretching or bending of the arm very attentively and precisely, it is possible to experience their impermanence, suffering, and selflessness as they arise and pass away one after another.

Realising each individual movement very precisely enables you to remove the idea of self, me, or mine which is the cause of all negative mental states or defilements. By noting as many intentions as possible before each individual movement in walking and carrying out daily activities, the meditators will come to realise through their experiential knowledge that it is nothing but the intention that causes the lifting movement of the foot or the stretching and bending of the arm. There is nothing but intention that pushes the foot forward, causes it to drop, and so on. There is no person, being, or self who lifts the foot, pushes it forward, or drops it.

This is the insight knowledge, *vipassanā ñāṇa*, that penetrates into the movement of the foot and realises it as it is. *vipassanā ñāṇa* can lead the meditator even during walking meditation to enlightenment. Any *maggañāṇa* or *phalañāṇa*, path knowledge or fruition knowledge, can be attained through the practice of walking meditation.

At the time when the Buddha was eighty years old and was

lying on his death bed in the Kushinagara Park on the night of Vesak, a mendicant named Subhadda came and requested the Venerable Ānanda to allow him to see the Buddha. Subhadda asked the Buddha some questions which were not relevant to the cessation of suffering, or to the attainment of *Nibbāna*. The Buddha responded, "Subhadda, this is not the time for me to answer these questions. I will teach you the way that leads to the cessation of suffering. Listen carefully". Subhadda listened to the Buddha's explanation of the Noble Eightfold Path, the way leading to the cessation of suffering.

In the Noble Eightfold Path, there is a mental factor called mindfulness, *sati*. The Buddha said, "Subhadda, this mindfulness together with the other seven factors is the way which will lead to the cessation of suffering, so develop that mindfulness". Then the Buddha taught him how to be mindful of whatever arises in the body and mind just as it occurs. Subhadda was pleased with what the Buddha had taught him and, bowing to the Buddha, retired to a secluded corner of the park. There he did not sit but walked up and down, observing each movement of the step precisely and attentively. The scripture doesn't mention how he observed the movement of the foot but only says that he practised walking meditation. I think that he would have observed the movement of the foot just as we are doing it in this retreat, because every action or movement is a physical phenomenon which must be thoroughly realised as having the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and non-self, *anicca*, *dukkha*, and *anattā*.

Within a few hours Subhadda experienced the three characteristics of the movement of the foot and clearly realised the impermanence, suffering, and selflessness of phenomena. Gradually, his insight knowledge matured and he passed through all the stages of insight knowledge and attained the first *magga*, *sotāpattimagga*, path knowledge, the second, *sakadāgāmimagga*, and the third, *anāgāmimagga*. Finally, he attained *arahattamagga*, the fourth path knowledge and reached *arahantship*. He

returned to the Buddha and reported what he had attained. Subhadda was the last disciple of the Buddha to become an *arahant* in the Buddha's life time and he did so by just practising walking meditation.

So, take the walking meditation seriously and observe each movement precisely and attentively. Realise the impermanence, suffering, and selflessness of the movement of the foot, a physical phenomenon, and progress in insight knowledge.

Awareness of daily activities is an important factor in making progress in meditation. The Buddha taught a separate chapter about clear comprehension in the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta. This is the discourse that teaches the technique of mindfulness meditation. In the chapter on clear comprehension, *sampajañña pabbaṃ* is translated as "the chapter on clear comprehension" by Western Pāḷi scholars. Though this may be so, I think it can also be translated as "full awareness of all actions and movements in the daily routine".

There the Buddha said:

> "*Abhikante patikante sampajāna kārī hoti.*
> *Alokite vilokite sampajāna kārī hoti.*
> *Samiñjite passarite sampajāna kārī hoti …*"

This translates as: "when walking forward or when walking backward, observe it as it is. When stretching or bending the arm or leg, observe it as it is. When looking straight ahead or looking to the side, observe it as it is. When holding robes and alms bowl, observe it as it is". Or, for lay meditators, we might say, when dressing or preparing to dress, observe each action and movement as it is.

The Buddha even taught us to be aware of all actions and movements in the toilet or bathroom because any action made without mindfulness makes the mind defiled. If an action is not performed mindfully and observed, that action causes any defilement to enter the mind. So, for example, dropping the hand

without being attentive of the action may result in the contact of some object, causing discomfort or even injury, and so *dosa*, anger or aversion, arises. If the hand is put down slowly, attentively noting it as "putting down, putting down, putting down", then there will be no such suffering by accident.

When eating, suppose you are chewing bread, observe the actions of chewing, noting them as "chewing, chewing, chewing" with the attention directed to the movements of the mouth and not to the food itself. Mindful of these movements, the meditator may not be aware of the taste of the food, that is not knowing it as sour, salty, sweet, or hot. Then there is no attachment to the food. There is neither desire for it nor anger about it because the attention is directed to the movement of the mouth and the noting of "chewing, chewing, chewing, chewing, chewing".

Gradually, with deeper concentration the meditator comes to realise that these movements naturally arise and pass away one after another, and in this way he or she knows the impermanence of the chewing movement. At that moment, there is neither desire, *lobha*, nor anger, *dosa*, nor any other mental defilement because the meditator is mindful of the chewing movement. In this way, every thing can be observed in more and more detail by gradually slowing down all actions and movements. Unless the actions of the daily routine are performed slowly, the attention cannot precisely catch each individual movement. Only when you slow down all actions and movements in the daily routine, whatever it may be, can your mind catch each individual action and movement and realise its arising and passing away, its impermanence, and so on.

The Venerable Ānanda himself attained *arahantship* by being aware of daily activities. When the Buddha was alive, the Venerable Ānanda had only attained the first path knowledge, the first stage of enlightenment. Three months after the Buddha's passing away the senior mahātheras wanted to hold a Council, *sagāyana saṅgīti*, and they wished the Venerable Ānanda to participate. However, such a Council must only comprise *arahants*.

As the Venerable Ānanda had not yet attained *arahantship* he was requested to do so before the Council commenced. The Venerable Ānanda strove hard, being aware of all mental states and physical processes.

Practising walking meditation one night and attaining deep concentration, he went to his room to sit down, mindfully being aware of all actions and movements. On reaching his bed, he stood observing the standing posture and sat down, being mindful of all actions in the process of sitting down. He wished to lie down for some time because he felt stiff in the whole body due to the long hours of walking. He gradually lowered his body into a reclining position. Before his head touched the pillow and as soon as his feet had lifted off the ground he attained the three higher stages of enlightenment. By experiencing the arising and passing away of all mental states and physical processes he attained *arahantship* at that moment of lying down. The next morning he participated in the First Council.

The Venerable Ānanda attained the three higher stages of enlightenment by being mindful of daily activities attentively and precisely and observing them in more and more detail. This is why awareness of daily activities is the second most important factor to make progress in concentration as well as insight. Take it all seriously, being aware of each action and movement in more and more detail, slowing down all actions and movements as much as possible.

May all of you rightly understand the technique of walking meditation and awareness of daily activities, strive hard, and attain the cessation of suffering.

The Four Reflections & Review of Instructions

Because I would like you to rightly understand the technique of meditation, it is important to know about the preparatory stages before you start to do meditation. These preparatory stages are mentioned in Pāḷi meditation texts and they give some important recollections.

The first one is to pay respect to the Buddha, the *Dhamma*, and the *Saṅgha* and to take the eight precepts. Observing the precepts is a basic requirement for every meditator's practice as I told you yesterday, whether it is *samatha* or *vipassanā* meditation.

After you have taken the eight precepts, you should make an apology if you have spoken contemptuously or in jest to a noble one, an *ariya puggala*, or about a noble one who has attained enlightenment by realising any stage of path or fruition knowledge. You have to personally apologise to him or her. If that person is not available, you have to make an apology through your meditation teacher, or you should do it introspectively to yourself. In this way, whatever you happened to do to this noble one is no longer a hindrance to your progress in meditation, especially to your attainment of enlightenment.

After that, you have to entrust yourself to the Omniscient Buddha. If you do so, you won't have any unpleasant or dreadful visions in your meditation, or if you do, your mind is not moved by this vision. You note it and it passes away because you have

entrusted yourself to the Buddha. In other stages, you have to place yourself under the guidance of a teacher, so that the teacher can instruct you, or teach you frankly and correct you, if you practise wrongly. Unless you place yourself under the guidance of a teacher, the teacher may be reluctant to teach you frankly and to correct you, if you have some defects in the practice. Then there are the "Four Protections" known as *caturarakkha dhamma*, or the "*dhamma* of four protections". When you perform these before you start your *vipassanā* meditation, it is very helpful for your progress. The subjects of the Four Protections are: the first one is the recollection of the Buddha's attributes or *buddhānussati bhāvanā*. The second one is *mettā* meditation, or loving kindness towards all living beings. The third one is the reflection on the loathsome aspects of the body or *asubha bhāvanā*. The fourth one is the reflection on death or *maraṇānussati* in Pāḷi.

As to the recollection of the Buddha's attributes you have to reflect upon the nine key attributes of the Buddha which are *arahaṃ, sammāsambuddho, vijjā caraṇa sampanno, sugato, lokavidū*, and so on. Here *arahaṃ* means "worthy one". The Buddha is worthy of our honour, because he has completely eliminated all kinds of defilements and his mind is perfectly purified. Reflecting on this attribute of arahaṃ also inspires you to make progress in your meditation.

The second attribute is *sammāsambuddho*. *Sammāsambuddho* means that the Buddha is perfectly enlightened by himself. He had no teacher to make him enlightened. He didn't learn anything from another teacher to discover the truth, purify his mind, and to destroy all defilements.

Before he was enlightened, he learned *samatha* meditation from the two great teachers of the age. From the first teacher he learned *samatha* meditation which enabled him to attain the seven stages of *jhāna* concentration. But he was not able to discover the truth because this was just concentration, not realisation of phenomena. Staying with a second teacher, he was able to attain all the eight stages of *jhāna*. We call it *aṭṭha samāpatti*, meaning

the eight kinds of attainment. So here also, he was unable to discover the truth. He was unable to become enlightened because this was also just concentration, not realisation of phenomena.

After that he came to realise that the *jhānas* were not the *dhamma* that would enable him to discover the truths or to be free from suffering. So he left these two teachers and performed ascetic practices for six years by himself in the forest of Uruvelā. But this also was wrong practice since it did not enable him to attain anything.

Then he went to Buddhagaya where he sat under the Bodhi tree. First of all he practised *samatha* meditation by which he attained the first, second, third, and fourth stage of *jhāna*, or deep concentration. He then observed whatever arose in the body and mind as it is. That was *vipassanā*, and only then did he come to realise the three characteristics of mentality and physicality, namely impermanence, suffering, and non-self or no soul. Eventually, having destroyed all mental defilements, he attained enlightenment. So the Buddha was perfectly enlightened by himself. He did not have any help or any teaching from other teachers. That is called *sammāsambuddho*.

Reflecting on these attributes, you can attain some degree of concentration. You are then inspired to go forward with your practice ardently and earnestly. This protection meditation, the recollection of the Buddha's attributes, *buddhānussati bhāvanā*, also protects you against any illness or any danger during your retreat.

Then the second one is *mettā* meditation, or loving kindness meditation. You have practised loving kindness meditation a good deal, I think, by wishing peace and happiness to all living beings and by reflecting upon their welfare. You may mentally say something like this:

> May all living beings be happy and peaceful.
> May all living beings be free from enmity.
> May all living beings be free from disease and danger.

> May all living beings be free from both mental and physical suffering.

In this way, you develop the spirit of loving kindness, *mettā*. This is also one of the protection meditations.

The third recollection is reflecting upon the loathsome aspects of the body. You have to reflect on your body, thinking about all the impurities in the body such as blood, pus, urine, faeces, intestines, stomach, phlegm, and so on. Reflecting upon the repulsive nature of the body, there is the benefit of detachment from the body. If you do not see the impurities of the body, there may be anxiety about the effects of strenuous effort in the meditation with such thoughts as "If I strive my best in the practice, I may get some illness or become weak", and so on. In this way, there may be reluctance to work hard in meditation because of attachment to the body. Meditation upon the loathsome aspects of the body decreases attachment to the body, so then you can strive your best and work hard in your practice.

The last one is the reflection on death. Everyone who is born is subject to death, but no one has the idea that he or she may die tonight or tomorrow, the day after tomorrow, or this month or next month. People assume that they will live at least another ten or twenty years or so, but death follows living beings very closely. At any time, one can die. That's why the Buddha said you should reflect upon death which can come to you at any time. When you reflect upon death, you should think about what the Buddha said:

> Death is certain.
> Death is sudden.
> Life is uncertain.
> Life is precarious.
> Death is sure.
> So at any moment, I may die.

In this way, if you reflect upon death, then you may feel

an urgency to practise meditation and to attain any stage of enlightenment or at least any stage of insight knowledge. So, this is also one of the protection meditations.

In summary, there are four protection meditations—the recollection of the Buddha's attributes, the development of loving kindness, the reflection on the loathsome aspects of the body, and the reflection on death.

Before you start to practice your *vipassanā* meditation, every day in early morning you should do these four protection meditations about two minutes each. Then you should spend about ten or fifteen minutes on *mettā* meditation which is very helpful for insight meditation. When you do *mettā* meditation, your mind becomes very easily concentrated on the object and you feel calm, peaceful, and tranquil. Only after that should you start to practice your insight meditation. When you finally switch your mind to *vipassanā*, then insight meditation is very good.

Sometimes your mind may be reluctant to practice or you may feel too lazy to practice. Sometimes you may have a lot of worries or a lot of restlessness and you are unable to observe them or to overcome them by noting them. In such cases, you should do *mettā* meditation, say about one or two sittings. Then gradually your mind will become concentrated on the object of *mettā*. You may feel calm, peaceful, and tranquil and so you can return to *vipassanā* meditation. *Mettā* meditation has such benefits. It is an effective meditation for *vipassanā* meditation.

May all of you rightly understand the technique of these four protections and the technique of *vipassanā* meditation, strive your best, and attain the cessation of suffering.

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Review of the Instructions for *vipassanā* Meditation[1]

Vipassanā is a compound word, combining *vi* and *passanā*. *Vi* means various i.e. the three characteristics (impermanence, suffering, non-self.) *Passanā* means right understanding or realisation by being mindful of mentality and physicality. So, *vipassanā* means the right understanding or realisation of the three characteristics of mentality and physicality.

Mental Noting

This is a technique of directing the attention to mind-body phenomena in order to rightly understand their true nature. The guiding principle in *vipassanā* practice is to observe whatever arises at the moment of its occurrence as it is. By observing the present, one lives in the present.

Be mindful or aware of any mental state or physical process as it occurs. Do not think about it, do not reflect on it, do not analyse it; just observe it as it is with direct, bare attention to it.

This is a technique of non-reactive awareness, or non-judging of mental and physical phenomena. When this mindfulness is continuous and constant, it is very powerful and penetrating, but it should be strengthened by "mental noting" or "labelling".

Note any object attentively and precisely. Superficial noting may make the mind more distracted. When concentration is weak, the tendency to skip over things can be checked by labelling or mental noting. The actual saying of the words which constitute the "label" is not really necessary, but it is helpful in the beginning. Do persist with the labelling until the noting becomes fluent. Drop it only if it becomes too cumbersome.

[1]The following instructions are from the book "Vipassanā Meditation Guidelines" by the Venerable Chanmyay Sayadaw (Ashin Janakabhivaṃsa). These were read aloud by the meditators before Sayadaw started to talk about the Four Protections.

The meditator will get an appreciation of the purpose of *vipassanā* meditation by bringing an investigative quality to the practice by means of mindfulness. This exploration can lead to the discovery of the true nature of the body-mind process.

Sitting Meditation

To prepare for sitting meditation, let the body and the mind relax as much as possible. Maintain the body in a well-balanced posture. Do not change the posture abruptly or unmindfully during the sitting. If you are about to move, note the intention to move before actually moving.

To give balance to the practice, every sitting should be preceded by an hour of walking meditation. In the changeover from walking to sitting practice, or vice versa, be careful to keep your mindfulness and concentration continuous.

The starting point in the sitting practice is to establish the attention on the sensations of the abdomen, caused by the rising and falling movement. This is done by synchronising the mental noting or labelling with the movement, while repeating "rising, rising", "falling, falling" with the actual experience of those sensations.

As the movement of the abdomen becomes steady and clear, increase the number of notings. If the movements are complicated, note them in a general way. If there is a gap between the rising and falling movement of the abdomen, insert the noting of "sitting" and/or "touching" (noting "sitting" is awareness of the characteristic of support of the wind element). Do not disturb the natural breathing by taking sharp or deep breaths. This will make you tired. The breathing should be just normal.

When secondary objects such as sounds, thoughts, or sensations predominate, note "hearing, hearing", "thinking, thinking", "feeling, feeling", and so on. At first it is not easy to note such a variety of objects, but with increased mindfulness one is able to do so. When secondary objects have passed, one goes back to

noting the primary object, the rising and falling movements of the abdomen.

Although the meditator is taught to begin with the watching of the rising and falling movement of the abdomen, he or she must not get attached to it, for it is not the only object, but one of the many varieties of objects in *vipassanā* meditation.

Mindfulness of the movement of the abdomen leads to the direct experience of the wind element, that is to its specific characteristics of motion, vibration, and support. It is then that one can rightly know the real nature of the wind element, thereby destroying the false view of self.

Walking Meditation

Take the walking meditation seriously. By merely doing walking meditation, it is possible to attain the highest enlightenment (*arahantship*).

Begin this practice by bringing your attention to the foot. Then note the step, part by part, as you follow the movement with sharp attention. Mentally note "left, right" as you do the steps while walking.

Keep the eyes half-closed and fixed on the ground, four to five feet ahead of you. Avoid looking at the foot during the walking, or you will become distracted by it. The mind should be focussed on the movements of the feet. Do not let the head bend too low, because this will very quickly create strain and tension in your posture.

The noted objects are increased gradually—that is the number of parts of the step observed are gradually increased. At the beginning of a walking meditation period, note only one part for about 10 minutes: "left, right", and so on. Then note your walking in three parts as "lifting, pushing, dropping", and so on. Then increase the noting to "intending, lifting, pushing, dropping, touching, pressing".

Please consider this: The mind is sure to wander off quite a

few times during a walking period of one hour, so do not look around here and there during walking meditation. You have had, and you will have, many more years to look around. If you do it during the retreat, you will break your concentration. The wandering eye is a difficult problem for the meditator, so take note very mindfully of the desire to look around.

For the practice to be effective at least six hours of walking and six hours of sitting meditation each day is recommended.

Mindfulness of Daily Activities

Awareness of daily activities is the very life of the meditator. Once a meditator fails to observe an activity, he loses his life, as it were—that is, he ceases to be a meditator because he is devoid of mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom. The faculty of mindfulness becomes powerful by constant and uninterrupted awareness of each and every activity throughout the day's practice.

Constant mindfulness gives rise to deep concentration and it is only through deep concentration that one can realise the intrinsic nature of mental and physical phenomena. This then leads one to the cessation of suffering.

Failing to note daily activities creates wide gaps of unmindfulness. Continuity of noting is needed to carry the awareness forward from one moment to the next. With this kind of practice, there are many new things to discover every day.

During a retreat, all you need to do is to be mindful. There is no need to hurry. The Venerable Mahāsi Sayadaw compared a *vipassanā* meditator to a weak invalid who by necessity moves about very slowly. Doing things terribly slowly helps to make the mind concentrated. If you want the meditation to develop, you must get accustomed to slowing down.

When a fan is turning fast, you cannot see it as it really is, but when it is turning slowly, then you can see it as it is, that is you see one blade after another moving. Therefore, you need to slow down considerably to be able to see clearly the

mental and physical processes as they really are. When you are surrounded by people who are doing things in a hurry, be oblivious of your surroundings. Instead, note your own mental and physical activities energetically.

Talking is a great danger to the progress of insight. A five minute talk can wreck a meditator's concentration for the whole day.

Pain and Patience

Pain is the friend of the meditator. Do not evade it. It can lead you to *Nibbāna*. Pain does not have to inform you of its coming. It may not disappear, but if it does, you may cry over it for your friend has gone away. Pain is observed not to make it go away, but to realise its true nature. Pain is the key to the door of *Nibbāna*. When concentration is good, pain is not a problem. It is a natural process. If you observe it attentively, the mind will become absorbed in it and discover its true nature.

When pain comes, note it directly. It is ignored only if it becomes overpoweringly persistent. It can be overcome by deep concentration brought about by continuous mindfulness. If intense pain arises during walking meditation, stop occasionally and take note of it.

Be patient with anything and everything that stimulates your mind. Do not react to it; observe it as it occurs. Patience leads to *Nibbāna*—impatience leads to hell.

Noting Mental States

When noting mental or emotional states, do it quickly, energetically, and precisely, so that the noting mind is continuous and powerful. Then thinking stops by itself.

Unless you can note the wandering thoughts, you are already defeated when attempting to concentrate the mind. If your mind is inclined to wander, it indicates that you are not really noting

thoughts energetically enough. The acquired ability to do this is indispensable. If you are aware of the content of thoughts, they will tend to go on. If you are aware of the thought itself, then thinking will cease.

Do not be attached to thinking and theory. Meditation is beyond time and space, so do not be caught up with thinking and theory. Insight will arise with deep concentration, but logical and philosophical thinking comes with shallow concentration.

Drowsiness can be overcome by putting in more effort. Vigorously labelling activities is helpful. Note sleepiness energetically. If you accept laziness, you will go on half-asleep. Actually, the energy to note is always there. The trouble is that you are reluctant to do it.

The mental attitude is very important, so do not be pessimistic. If you are optimistic, you offer yourself a good opportunity. Then there is satisfaction in every situation and there will be less distraction.

Guidance for Meditators at the Interview

All meditators report daily to the meditation teacher. They report on what they have noted and experienced during that day's practice. The teacher will suggest any corrections, give further instructions, and try to inspire the meditator onto further progress.

Enter the interview room slowly and mindfully before sitting in front of the teacher. Slowly and mindfully sit down and bow to the teacher, so that you are ready to report when it is your turn. When you talk to the teacher, hold your hands together in front of your chest as a sign of respect towards the teacher. Report about all the three aspects of the practice:

- Sitting meditation
- Walking meditation
- Daily activities

Be to the point and precise, only report about your actual, personal, and direct experience.

In *vipassanā* meditation there is no room and no need to analyse, to reason, to reflect, or to think about your experience in the practice. Analysing or reasoning are great dangers and stumbling blocks for the progress in *vipassanā* meditation.

Sitting meditation

- What is your primary object? (rising-falling, or sitting-touching)
- How do you note it?
- How do you experience it?
- How long do you sit?
- What other objects are noted (thoughts, emotions, pain, sounds, bodily sensations, etc.) and how are they experienced?
- Are there any problems or difficulties?

Walking meditation

- How do you note the steps and in how many parts? (right-left, lifting-pushing-dropping, lifting-pushing-dropping-touching, lifting-pushing-dropping-touching-pressing)
- Do you note intentions as well?
- How is the movement of the foot experienced?
- What are the other objects noted? (thoughts, emotions, pain, sounds, etc.)
- Are there any difficulties or problems?

Daily activities

- Are you able to note all the movements (intentions and movements) during the whole day?
- What actions are you able to note?
- Are you able to slow down more and more?
- Is there mindfulness in eating?
- Is there mindfulness in your room and in the bathroom?

- Is there mindfulness in changing places?
- What are you experiences during daily activities?

Report all your experiences without waiting for the teacher to make any remarks. This is normally done at the end of your report.

If asked any question, answer it directly. Do not speak about something else.

Listen carefully to all the instructions from the teacher and follow them diligently. If there is any doubt, ask the teacher.

Many meditators find that making short written notes immediately after each meditation is helpful, but one should not make it a point to attempt to remember while meditating as this will disturb concentration. If it is really important, you will remember.

Samatha and Vipassanā Meditation

As you know there are two types of meditation in Buddhism. One is *samatha* meditation and the other is *vipassanā* meditation. *samatha* here means concentration. When the mind becomes concentrated on a single object of meditation, it becomes calm, tranquil, and serene. So *samatha* is translated as "calm meditation" or "tranquillity meditation". It literally means the mental state that calms the mind, and the mental state that makes the mind calm is concentration. *vipassanā* means realisation, seeing, or right understanding. Literally it means "seeing the various characteristics". Here it refers to the three characteristics of existence, that is impermanence, suffering or unsatisfactoriness, and non-self, non-soul, or selflessness. In Pāḷi, impermanence or transience is called *anicca*, suffering or unsatisfactoriness is called *dukkha*, and non-self, non-ego, non-soul, or selflessness is called *anattā*. The word *vi* in *vipassanā* refers to these three characteristics. *Passanā* is "seeing", meaning realisation or right understanding. So *vipassanā* means realisation of impermanence, suffering, and non-self.

Samatha meditation is practised to attain deep concentration of the mind only, not to realise these three characteristics. *vipassanā* meditation is practised to attain some degree of concentration and to realise these three characteristics, thereby eradicating all mental defilements and to experience the cessation

of suffering, *Nibbāna*. When *samatha* meditation is practised, the meditator takes an object of meditation such as respiration, one of the ten types of *kasiṇa*, one of the ten types of *asubha*, and so on. There are forty subjects of *samatha* meditation. In ancient times, most meditators took respiration as the object of meditation. The object of *samatha* meditation is both concept and reality and the point is to concentrate the mind on the object very deeply, so that the mind is absorbed in the object. Absorption is, of course, *appanā* in Pāḷi. Nowadays, when we think a meditator should practise *samatha* during his *vipassanā* meditation, we usually teach him respiration (*ānāpānasati*), recollection of the Buddha's attributes (*buddhānussati bhāvanā*), or loving kindness meditation (*mettā bhāvanā*). Mostly, we teach *buddhānussati bhāvanā* and *mettā bhāvanā*, the development of loving kindness. Whatever the object may be, a *samatha* meditator only takes a single object of meditation.

When a *samatha* meditator tries to concentrate the mind on a single object of meditation such as respiration (in-breathing and out-breathing), he or she focuses the mind at the nostril or on the tip of the upper lip. Most of the time the mind has to stay with the in-breath and out-breath at the nostril. Whenever one breathes in, one observes the in-breath, making a mental note as "in". Whenever one breathes out, one focuses the mind at the nostril and observes the out-breathing, making a mental note as "out", thus "in, out, in, out". When the mind goes out, the meditator does not follow it by observing it, but brings it back to the primary object. The meditator observes the touching sensation at the nostril whenever the air comes in and whenever the air goes out. This touching sensation is the object of meditation. Touching has the four primary material elements, hardness or softness, fluidity or cohesion, heat or cold, and movement or motion. These elements constitute respiration, but the air element (movement, motion) is more distinct than the other three primary elements. The touching of the air at the nostril has also the four primary material elements of hardness or softness, cohesion, heat or cold,

and movement. But here in the touching, hardness or softness is more evident than the other three elements. Whatever it may be, the purpose of *samatha* meditation is to concentrate the mind on this touching sensation or on the respiration. So whenever the mind goes out, the meditator brings it back to the object of meditation, that is back to the respiration or the touching sensation because he or she wants to deeply concentrate the mind on a single object of meditation.

Meditators should be careful about the difference between the technique of *samatha* and *vipassanā* meditation. In *vipassanā* meditation, the purpose is to realise all mental states and physical processes in their true nature. Here, their true nature means the three characteristics which every mental state and physical process possesses. Any mental state or physical process may be the object of meditation. So, the *vipassanā* meditator must not take only a single object, but take many varieties of objects, mental states and physical processes. The *samatha* meditator takes only a single object, while the *vipassanā* meditator takes every mental state and physical process as the object of meditation. The purpose of *samatha* meditation is to concentrate the mind deeply on a single object of meditation. The purpose of *vipassanā* meditation is to realise the true nature of all mental states and physical processes.

A *vipassanā* meditator takes a physical process as the object of meditation such as the rising and falling movement of the abdomen. When the abdomen rises, the meditator observes it, making a mental note as "rising". When the abdomen falls, the meditator observes it, making a mental note as "falling". During the contemplation of the rising and falling movement of the abdomen the meditator may hear a voice or a distinct sound and this should be noted as "hearing, hearing". The meditator must not observe the content of the object but should observe the consciousness of hearing. He or she must not note the sound but the consciousness of hearing because the consciousness of hearing also includes the object or the content. After noting "hearing,

hearing" and the disappearance of the hearing consciousness, the meditator returns to the primary object, observing rising and falling.

In this way, whatever a meditator sees must be observed and noted as "seeing, seeing" and then he or she returns to the rising and falling movement, the primary object. Whatever he or she smells must be observed as "smelling, smelling" and then, when the smell has disappeared, he or she returns to the primary object, noting rising and falling. Whatever he or she tastes or touches must be observed as it is and then he or she returns to the primary object.

When the mind goes out or wanders off, the *vipassanā* meditator must not bring the mind back to the primary object. He or she must follow the mind and observe it attentively, making a mental note as "wandering, wandering", "thinking, thinking", "imagining, imagining", "planning, planning", and so on. When the wandering mind has stopped, the meditator returns to the primary object, noting rising and falling as usual.

Why does the *vipassanā* meditator follow the mind and observe it as it is? Because the purpose of insight meditation is to realise the characteristics of any mental state or physical process. So, to realise the three characteristics of a wandering mind, a meditator has to observe it as it is, making a mental note as "wandering, wandering", "thinking, thinking", and so on until that thought has disappeared. Only after it has disappeared should the meditator return to the primary object, noting it as usual.

Here the difference between the technique of *samatha* and *vipassanā* is very distinct. When the mind goes out in *samatha* meditation, it must be brought back to the primary object, focusing the mind on the respiration or any other object. The *samatha* meditator must not observe the wandering thought or thinking mind. He need not realise any mentality or physicality. What he or she needs to do is to attain deep concentration of the mind on a single object, focusing the mind attentively and noting the in- and out-breathing.

But the *vipassanā* meditator needs to realise the impermanent, unsatisfactory, and selfless nature of the wandering or thinking mind. He or she must observe the wandering thoughts or the thinking mind as it really occurs, noting "wandering, wandering", "thinking, thinking", or "imagining, imagining". When you note these thoughts, your noting mind should be more attentive, more energetic, and somewhat quick so that it becomes more and more powerful, more powerful than the thinking process or the wandering process. When the noting mind becomes stronger, sharper, and more powerful, it overwhelms the thinking mind or the thought process which then stops in a short time. But the purpose is not to make the thought processes stop or disappear but to realise them in their true nature. However, the meditator may be disturbed or annoyed by a wandering thought, and therefore he or she has to note the thought more attentively, more energetically, and somewhat more quickly to make the noting mind stronger, sharper, and more powerful. When the noting mind is weak, then it is overwhelmed by the wandering mind. The noting mind is dragged along by the thinking process. The thought process goes on and on and the meditator can't concentrate well.

So to make the noting mind stronger, sharper, and more powerful, the meditator notes the wandering or thinking mind more attentively, energetically, and somewhat quickly. Then the thinking process stops and at that time the meditator notices that the thought doesn't last long. It arises and passes away. So here the arising and passing away of the thought is vaguely realised as impermanent, though not clearly realised. When concentration becomes deeper and deeper, the meditator comes to realise that these individual thoughts arise and pass away one after another. A series of thoughts arise and pass away. Unless concentration is deep enough, the meditator is not able to realise it. The purpose is to realise these thoughts in regard to their three characteristics. So, whatever thoughts arise in sitting or walking, the meditator must note them attentively, energetically, and more quickly. When thoughts are noted, they become less and less, and con-

centration becomes deeper and deeper. If the thoughts are not noted, they increase and sometimes they persist for a very long time. Then concentration is weak.

There are two kinds of benefit from noting the thought process. One is better concentration of the mind and the other is the realisation of the three characteristics of thought. So when the mind goes out and wanders, the meditators must not fail to observe and note that thought as it is as "thinking, thinking", "wandering, wandering", or "imagining, imagining" to realise it in its true nature. This is the difference between *samatha* and *vipassanā* meditation. When the meditators realise the impermanent, unsatisfactory, and selfless nature of these thoughts, their mind is purified because they don't have any defilement in their mind. They realise thoughts in their three characteristics, seeing them as impermanent, unsatisfactory, and not a person, being, self, or soul, just mental states. Because they realise them in their true nature, their mind is purified. At that time their mind is liberated from mental defilements or negative mental states. When the mind is liberated from these defilements, at that time the meditators live in peace. This is the goal of *vipassanā* meditation.

When the mind is liberated from negative mental states or defilements, then later on the body is also liberated from suffering. In this way, both body and mind are liberated from all kinds of suffering. This is the purpose of *vipassanā*.

So here, what I want you to understand is that in *samatha* meditation, when the mind goes out, the meditator has to bring it back to the primary object. In *vipassanā* meditation, when the mind goes out, the meditator must follow the mind and observe it as it is, noting it as "thinking", "wandering", and so on. When the *samatha* meditator attains to access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*) or to absorption concentration (*jhāna samādhi*), which is when his mind is totally absorbed in the object of meditation, there are no mental defilements in that concentrated mind. At that time the concentrated mind is purified from hindrances or mental defilements. This is called purification of mind because

there is no greed, hatred, ignorance, conceit, jealousy, and so on. So the meditator feels peaceful and happy. That is the benefit of *samatha* meditation. But when the mind is disengaged from the object of meditation, the concentration is also broken and the mind goes to many different objects. Many defilements come into the mind. When the mind is defiled with greed, anger, or ignorance, the meditator does not feel happy or peaceful. He is suffering. The *samatha* meditator enjoys peacefulness of mind while his or her mind is deeply concentrated on a single object of meditation. As long as the mind is absorbed in the object he or she feels peaceful calm, tranquil, and serene.

In *vipassanā* meditation, the meditator concentrates the mind to a certain extent on any mental states or physical processes. Then he or she realises the true nature of mentality and physicality, that is their impermanent, suffering, and selfless nature. The meditator's mind is purified at that moment because he or she realises these three characteristics of mental states and physical processes. He or she does not realise it through theoretical knowledge or through learning scriptures but through his or her own personal experience of mental and physical phenomena. This experience of the three characteristics is very deep and profound. This experience remains in the mind all the time, though this insight knowledge of the three characteristics is also impermanent, unsatisfactory, and selfless. It arises and passes away. Actually, the force of this insight knowledge remains in the thought processes, in the process of consciousness which continues for life. So even though the meditators leave the meditation centre and go home or back to work, they may sometimes recollect their meditative experiences of these three characteristics, and they manifest in their mind as if they are realising them at that moment. Then their mind is purified and they feel peaceful and tranquil. The benefit of *vipassanā* meditation not only manifests in sitting but also in the whole life and the next life. So, it helps the mind be purified at any time. That's why the *vipassanā* meditator lives in peace and happiness to a certain extent.

If the meditator has attained any of the four stages of enlightenment, the first stage (*sotāpattimagga*), the second stage (*sakadāgāmimagga*), the third stage (*anāgāmimagga*), or the fourth stage of enlightenment (*arahattamagga*), his or her mind is more purified because some of the mental defilements have been uprooted by the path knowledge. The meditator has abandoned some of the mental defilements which cause suffering and he or she can live in peace and happiness to a certain extent. But if the meditator is able to attain all the four stages of enlightenment, his or her mind is completely purified all the time and liberated from all kinds of mental defilements. Then he or she lives at peace and in happiness. That is why we should practise *vipassanā* meditation, insight meditation.

May all of you rightly understand the purpose of *vipassanā* meditation and strive to attain the cessation of suffering, liberation!

Why We Practise Vipassanā Meditation

We will continue to discuss why we should practise mindfulness meditation or *vipassanā* meditation. The day before yesterday, I talked about some differences between *samatha* meditation and *vipassanā* meditation. Now, I will say how *samatha* meditation is helpful for the *vipassanā* meditator to attain insight knowledge and enlightenment.

We should practise *vipassanā* meditation to liberate our mind from all mental defilements and also to liberate ourselves from all kinds of suffering. Here, liberation is of two types: one is temporary liberation and the other is ultimate liberation. When a meditator practises *samatha* meditation, he attains deep concentration of the mind. When the mind is deeply concentrated on any object of meditation, it is purified from defilements or hindrances. Thus, the meditator feels calm and peaceful. But this purity of mind is just temporary and not ultimate because the mind is purified as long as it is deeply concentrated on the object of meditation. When the mind is disengaged from meditative practice or the meditation object, then concentration is broken. At that moment, any mental defilement or hindrance can come into the mind and the mind gets defiled. Then the purity is destroyed by that defilement.

Defilements are known as *kilesa* in Pāḷi. The Buddha said that there are ten kinds of *kilesas*. They are *lobha*, *dosa*, *moha*, *māna*,

diṭṭhi, *vicikicchā*, *thīna-middha*, *uddhacca-kukkucca*, *ahirika*, and *anottappa*.

Lobha includes all kinds of lust, greed, craving, desire, attachment, or grasping. All of these mental states are included in the Pāḷi term *lobha*. When greed arises in the mind, the mind gets defiled. When desire, craving, lust, or love arises in the mind, it gets defiled. The purity of mind is destroyed by defilements. The Buddha said that the original nature of the mind is pure, it is not defiled. Only when mental defilements such as desire or craving arise together with the mind, does the mind get defiled. The original nature of the mind, which is purity, is destroyed by defilements.

Dosa is anger, hatred, ill-will, and aversion. When any of these mental states arise, the mind gets defiled, it becomes unwholesome. An unwholesome mind together with its unwholesome mental states makes a person suffer and makes him or her unhappy. This suffering is caused by unwholesome mental states, *kilesas* or defilements. When anger arises in the mind, the mind gets defiled and then we suffer a lot. Because of the anger we may speak evil or do evil actions. This evil speech or evil action results in suffering, unhappiness. This is the result of the impure mind which is associated with anger. That's why the mind needs to be purified from this defilement.

Moha is ignorance or delusion. When ignorance arises together with the mind, then that consciousness gets defiled, it becomes unwholesome, and it can produce unwholesome speech or unwholesome action which results in suffering. When ignorance or delusion arises in the mind, one doesn't differentiate between good and bad, right and wrong, justice and injustice, or fairness and unfairness. One is caught in evil. Ignorance destroys the purity of the mind, and as such it is a mental defilement or *kilesa*.

Māna is also a mental defilement. *Māna* means conceit.

When *diṭṭhi*, wrong view, arises, the mind gets defiled. Wrong

view leads the mind to the wrong path, so it leads to suffering. Wrong view is also a mental defilement, a mental impurity.

Vicikicchā is sceptical doubt about the Triple Gem. One is doubtful about the Buddha, *Dhamma*, and *Saṅgha*. This doubt makes the mind defiled.

Thīna-middha is sloth and torpor or mental sluggishness. When sloth and torpor arise in the mind or consciousness, the mind becomes defiled. Sloth and torpor are the companions of a meditator. When a meditator has these two friends, he or she can't concentrate well because the mind is defiled. He or she feels sleepy, the head nods, and he or she sometimes falls asleep.

Uddhacca-kukkucca is restlessness or distraction and remorse. They are a pair of mental states that defile the mind. When there is *uddhacca*, dissipated thought, the mind cannot be concentrated on the object. It goes to this object, then to that object. It doesn't stay with a single object and it is the opposite of concentration. It leads the mind to unwholesome objects and there arise unwholesome mental states such as *lobha*, *dosa*, and so on. Then the mind gets defiled.

Ahirika, moral shamelessness, and *anottappa*, moral fearlessness, are also among the ten mental defilements.

But there are some mental states which are akin to these ten mental states such as jealousy, stinginess, and so on. They are also included in the mental defilements.

When the mind is associated with the any of these mental factors, its purity is soiled. An unwholesome mind together with its unwholesome mental states produces unwholesome speech and unwholesome deeds which result in every kind of mental and physical suffering. These mental defilements, the *kilesas*, are negative qualities of the mind. The defiled mind leads to suffering and that's why it needs to be purified, since only a purified mind is liberated from defilements and suffering. So liberation, *Nibbāna*, can be attained through purification of mind. This purity of mind must be ultimate, not temporary.

Samatha meditation enables a person to temporarily purify

his or her mind. As long as his or her mind is deeply concentrated on a single object of meditation, it is purified from hindrances and defilements and the meditator feels calm and composed, tranquil and peaceful. When concentration is broken, any mental defilement can enter the mind and the purity of the mind is soiled by defilements. The purity of the mind that one attains by means of *samatha* meditation is just temporary. The Buddha taught us insight meditation so that we can attain ultimate purity of the mind and, as a result, liberation from all kinds of suffering.

Why does the mind get defiled? When we see any visible object, hear any sound, smell any odour, taste any food, touch any tangible thing, or think about any mind object, we are not mindful of it, we do not observe it. When we see a visible object, we are not aware of it, we are not mindful of it as it is. Because we do not observe it as it really is, we get involved in that object and as a result there is a reaction to it that may be good or bad. If we cannot observe the object as it really occurs, there may arise unwise attention towards the object. Unwise attitude or improper attitude takes the object to be good or bad. If the object is taken as bad, aversion or anger may arise towards it, and that anger spoils the purity of the mind. Then the unwholesome mind together with the unwholesome mental states of aversion and ill-will creates suffering.

The reason for this suffering is that we get involved in the object which is not observed as it is. Then we judge the object to be good or bad. If we judge the object to be bad, an unpleasant feeling arises in regard to the object. Together with the unpleasant feeling there arises aversion or ill-will which are defilements. That aversion or ill-will spoils the purity of the mind and the mind gets defiled, it becomes unwholesome.

To make the mind free from these defilements, we must not get involved in the object. We must not judge the object and we must not entertain pleasant or unpleasant feelings in regard to the object. To attain this state of neutrality we should be mindful of the object as it really occurs. When we see the object as it

really is, we have no judgement about it or no reaction to it. So we should use this non-reactive mindfulness or non-judgemental awareness whenever we see, hear, smell, taste, touch, or think. In this way, the purity of the mind is not disturbed by any of the mental defilements. Mental defilements arise when the object is judged to be good or bad.

We have to see the object through our intuitive awareness or intuitive insight. The intuitive insight does not judge any object. It sees it as it is. Then there won't arise any mental defilements and the purity of the mind won't be spoiled by any of the defilements.

We maintain the purity of the mind by watching the object as it really occurs. This is mindfulness meditation. That's why the Buddha said to be mindful of any physical phenomenon, to be mindful of any feeling, pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral, to be mindful of consciousness, and to be mindful of any *dhamma* or mental objects. The Buddha taught four types of mindfulness:

- *kāyānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*: mindfulness of physical phenomena
- *vedanānupassana satipaṭṭhāna*: mindfulness of feeling
- *cittānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*: mindfulness of consciousness
- *dhammānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*: mindfulness of mental objects

Though the Omniscient Buddha taught these four foundations of mindfulness we do not have to choose among them because the mind knows which object is more prominent than other objects. So, we have to be aware of the predominant object, either a mental state or a physical process, observing or watching it as it really occurs. When we can be aware of any mental state or physical process, we won't be judgemental about the object, whether it is a physical object, a feeling, consciousness, or mental objects.

Thus mental defilements do not arise and the mind does not get defiled but becomes purified.

To train ourselves to be aware of whatever arises in our body and mind, the Buddha taught the Discourse on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta. By practising mindfulness in accordance with the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta, we are able to be mindful of any mental state or physical process as it really occurs. Later on when concentration becomes deeper, we can be mindful of any visible object, any sound or voice, any scent or odour, any taste or food, or any tangible thing as it is. When we are able to see these things as they really are, we don't have any mental defilements at all. The purity of the mind is not destroyed by any mental defilements, and we feel peaceful, calm, and serene.

Because of wrong view, one of the mental defilements, we tend to judge the object to be good or bad. That wrong view arises dependent on ignorance of these mental states and physical processes as they really are. Thus arises the wrong view of self or soul, me or mine, a person or a being. When that wrong view of a personality, self, or soul arises, the person has a desire to be a king or queen, to be a wealthy person, a millionaire, and so on. The desire to be and to have arises dependent on the idea of a person, a being, or a self. When this desire arises, the mind gets defiled and it can't be liberated from the defilements. When we have the wrong view or wrong concept of a person, being, self, or soul, anger arises dependent on the idea of a person or a being. Then the person is angry with something or some person or being.

The wrong view of a personality or an individual self is called *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* or *attadiṭṭhi* in Pāḷi. It is the cause of mental impurity. That's why the Buddha said: "*Sakkāyadiṭṭhi pahānāya sato bhikkhu paribbaje*".

Sakkāyadiṭṭhi means wrong view of a person or a self. *Pahānāya* means to overcome or remove. Sato means to be mindful. Bhikkhu means a monk. *Paribbaje* means to strive. Thus

the meaning of this phrase is, "Develop mindfulness in order to remove the wrong view of a person, a being, or a soul".

Why does this wrong view need to be removed or overcome?

Because it is the cause of all mental defilements which spoil the purity of the mind. If you entertain any mental state, for example happiness, and you are not mindful of it or you do not observe it as it is, then you feel "I am happy".

It isn't "me" or "I" who is happy. This mental state "happiness" that arises dependent on its cause is taken to be "me" or "mine", a "person" or a "being". Why? Because it is not observed as it really occurs. If we are mindful of this happiness as "happy, happy, happy" as it is, then the mind gets gradually concentrated on this happiness. With deep concentration, we come to realise that this happiness is nothing but a mental state. Later on we come to realise that it arises and passes away. But because we do not observe it as it really is, that mental state is taken to be experienced by a permanent being, a "happy me" or a "happy I". The mental phenomenon is taken to be a person, a being, a self, or a soul. Then, because of that wrong view of a person or being which takes this happiness as a person or a being, there arises desire for more happiness. That desire is a defilement. It defiles the purity of the mind and the mind becomes unwholesome. It becomes agitated and it will produce suffering in many respects. When we observe this happiness as it really is, we will know it is neither a person nor a being, but just a process of mentality. Thus no mental defilements will arise.

That's why the Buddha taught us to be mindful of any mental state or of any physical process as it really occurs. When mindfulness becomes constant and consistent, sharp and powerful, then our mind can be aware of any mental state or physical process that arises from moment to moment. We don't have any judgement of the object. We don't have any reaction to the object because the object, the mental state or physical process, is realised as it really occurs in its true nature. This is the way to purify the mind eternally.

When insight knowledge realises these mental states and physical processes, which are observed, then it goes up one stage after another and finally it can change into enlightenment or path knowledge. This eliminates some of the mental defilements together with their supporting potentialities, *anusaya*. When the mind takes the object and judges it to be good or bad, defilements arise because of these potentialities in the mind. When the *maggañāṇa*, the path knowledge, which is attained by means of mindfulness meditation, eliminates some of the mental defilements together with their supporting potentialities, the mind becomes purified to a large extent.

There are four stages of enlightenment which eliminate these mental defilements together with their potentialities. The first stage is known as *sotāpattimagga*. The second stage is *sakadāgāmimagga*. The third stage is *anāgāmimagga*. The fourth stage is *arahattamagga*. When we have attained the fourth stage of enlightenment, all mental defilements together with their potentialities have been eliminated. Then the mind is completely and perfectly purified. This is the ultimate purity of the mind and the liberation from all mental defilements. It is called *cetovimutti*, a mind liberated from defilements. Then, we don't have any mental suffering at all. But because we have physical phenomena there may be some physical affliction. The *arahant* who has attained the fourth stage of enlightenment sees physical affliction as it is and does not take the unpleasantness or unhappiness to be his or hers. In this way, a liberated mind gives the meditator peace and happiness. That's why we should practise this mindfulness meditation. The purpose is to liberate our mind from all mental defilements and all kinds of suffering.

May all of you rightly understand the technique of this mindfulness meditation and strive your best to attain the cessation of suffering and the liberation from all kinds of suffering.

The Importance of Observing the Mind

On the previous two days we have been talking about the liberation of mind from the defilements. The topic is why we should practise *vipassanā* meditation, insight meditation. The so-called person or being is composed of both mentality and materiality, *nāma* and *rūpa*. *Nāma* and *rūpa* are divided into five aggregates. The Buddha taught these five aggregates. *Nāma* (mentality) consists of these four aggregates:

- *vedanākkhandha*: aggregate of feeling
- *saññākkhandha*: aggregate of perception
- *saṅkhārakkhandha*: aggregate of mental formations
- *viññāṇakkhandha*: aggregate of consciousness

These are the four aggregates which are mental phenomena or *nāma*. Physical phenomena are contained in only one aggregate called *rūpakkhandha*. In this way, there are five kinds of aggregates. One contains physical phenomena and the other four contain mental phenomena.

At times the Omniscient Buddha gave a discourse summarising these five aggregates into two kinds or two processes: *nāma* and *rūpa*, mental and physical phenomena. Thus, *nāma* and *rūpa*

must be thoroughly realised by the meditator so that he or she can liberate the mind from all defilements.

It is much more important to realise *nāma*, mentality, than to realise physical phenomena, *rūpa*, because it is *nāma*, mental phenomena, that creates the world. Here "the world" means all living beings in the world.

The Buddha said:

> *"Mano pubbaṅgamā dhamma,*
> *mano seṭṭhā manomayā.*
> *Manasā ce paduṭṭhena,*
> *bhāsati vā karoti vā.*
> *Tato naṃ dukkhamanveti,*
> *cakkaṃva vahato padaṃ".*
>
> "The mind is the leader.
> The mind is the dominant one.
> All things are made by the mind.
> If one should speak or act with a corrupted mind,
> The *dukkha* caused by that follows him,
> As the wheel of a cart does the ox's hoof".[2]

When you do an unwholesome deed, the cause is unwholesome mentality, unwholesome mental states. Unwholesome mental states are called *akusala* in Pāḷi. An unwholesome mind creates unwholesome speech and deeds. Wholesome mental states are called *kusala*. A wholesome mind creates wholesome speech and deeds.

So, the original cause of good deeds and good speech is a wholesome mind. The original cause of bad deeds and bad speech is an unwholesome mind. When the mind is unwholesome, deeds and speech become unwholesome and this produces suffering. When the mind is wholesome, then deeds and speech are wholesome and this produces happiness and peace.

[2] Dhammapada, verse 1

So, the mind is the most important thing of all. The mind is much more important than the body. That is why the Buddha said *vimutta citta* which means "a liberated mind". He didn't say *vimutta kāya* which means "a liberated body". The Buddha never said *vimutta kāya*, a liberated body. Why did he always say *vimutta citta*, a liberated mind? Because when the mind is liberated from defilements and suffering, the body also becomes liberated from suffering.

As you know, the Venerable Moggallāna had a liberated mind, completely liberated from all defilements through to the final stage of enlightenment, *arahantship*. But when he was about to pass away, he was killed by some robbers because of his past *kamma*. The robbers thought that the venerable one was dead, but actually he was not yet dead as he entered into *phalasamāpatti* which protects one's life against any killing. He was beaten by the robbers to "a sack of chaff", but he did not feel any physical suffering because his mind was liberated from defilements and he was not attached to his body. He saw the unpleasant physical sensations arising and passing away, seeing them merely as natural processes of feelings.

Though his body was afflicted and injured by being beaten very badly, he didn't feel any painful sensations. He didn't feel any suffering because his mind was liberated from all defilements. He didn't take his body to be himself. He was able to see it as an ever-changing mental and physical phenomenon. Unless his mind was liberated from defilements, he would have suffered a great deal. So, he didn't take any mental and physical phenomena to be a person, a self, a being, or a man. What he really saw were ever-changing mental and physical phenomena and so he was not attached to his body. He was liberated from physical suffering.

That is why the Buddha said that the mind should be liberated from defilements. When the mind is liberated, you don't have mental or physical suffering. That's why the Buddha taught us to train our mind and to see things as they really are by means

of mindfulness meditation. We have to practise mindfulness meditation so that we can liberate the mind from defilements.

Then how can we liberate the mind from defilements and suffering? One day the Venerable Sāriputta went to the Omniscient Buddha and asked him a question. "Venerable sir, it is said 'a great man, a great man'. In what way, venerable sir, is one a great man?" The Buddha said, "With a liberated mind, I say, Sāriputta, one is a great man. Without a liberated mind, I say, one is not a great man".

A "great man" is *mahā purisa* in Pāḷi. *Mahā* means "great" or "noble" and *purisa* means "man", so *mahā purisa* means a "great man". *Mahā purisa* sometimes refers to the would-be-Buddha. In some cases, it refers to a "noble man" and in this discourse, it refers to an *arahant*.

The Buddha said, "Sāriputta, when a man's mind is liberated from defilements, he is a great man. When a man's mind is not liberated from defilements, he is not liberated, he is not a great man".

So here "with a mind liberated" means *vimutta citto* in Pāḷi. *Vimutta* means liberated, *citto* means mind. Then the Buddha continued to explain how the mind may be liberated,

> *"Idha sāriputta bhikkhu kāye kāyānupassī viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ*".
>
> "Here, Sāriputta, a bhikkhu dwells contemplating the body in the body,… [feelings in feelings, mind in mind, phenomena in phenomena,] …ardent, clearly comprehending, mindful, having removed covetousness and displeasure in regard to the world".[3]

Because one practises this contemplation of body, feelings, mind, and phenomena, one's mind becomes detached from everything. Then it is liberated from all kinds of *āsava*. Here *āsava*

[3] SN 47:11.

refers to all kinds of mental defilements. In this way, one's mind is liberated from *āsava* and one is a great man with a liberated mind. If a person does not practise contemplation of body, feelings, mind, and phenomena, he or she is not "a great man", because the mind is not liberated from defilements.

The Buddha said that to liberate one's mind, one should practise the contemplations of the body as body, of feelings as feelings, of consciousness as consciousness, and of phenomena as phenomena. Here the Buddha taught the four foundations of mindfulness or the four types of mindfulness:

- Mindfulness of the body: *kāyānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*
- Mindfulness of feeling: *vedanānupassana satipaṭṭhāna*
- Mindfulness of mind or consciousness: *cittānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*
- Mindfulness of phenomena: *dhammānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*

The Buddha said that if one practises this mindfulness, one's mind will become detached from everything. Then it will be liberated from all mental defilements. So, the mindfulness meditation you are now practising is the way to be "a great man" with a mind liberated from defilements.

Here "a great man" refers to an *arahant*. We must be careful that the Buddha didn't say *vimutta kāya*, a liberated body, but he said *vimutta citto*, a liberated mind. So the most important thing is to be aware from moment to moment of any mental states that may arise.

In the discourse of the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta, the Buddha taught "mindfulness of consciousness" in some detail:

> "*Sarāgam vā cittaṃ 'sarāgaṃ cittan'ti pajānāti'.*
> *Vitarāgam va cittaṃ 'vitarāgaṃ cittan'ti pajānāti*' ".

This passage means, "When the mind is with lust, you should observe it as with lust". When it happens in your mind that lust arises, at that moment you should note it as "lust, lust", "greed, greed", "desire, desire", and so on. Here the Buddha used the word *rāga*. The word *rāga* covers all senses of lust, love, greed, desire, craving, attachment, and grasping. So when there is desire in your mind, you should observe it as "desire, desire, desire". When greed arises, you should observe it as "greed, greed, greed". When there is attachment, you should observe it as "attachment, attachment, attachment", and so on.

In the Buddhist scriptures, sometimes the word "mind" or "*citta*" is used for all these mental states together with the mind. So, mentality is the most important thing to be aware of or to be mindful of in this world. Why? Because it is the mind that must be liberated from all kinds of defilements and suffering.

Then again,

"*Sadosaṃ vā cittaṃ 'sadosaṃ cittan'ti pajānāti*' ".

When you have anger in your mind, you should observe it as "anger, anger, anger" as it is. Here also the word *dosa* covers all senses of anger, hatred, aversion, and ill-will. All these are called *dosa*. So when you have anger in your mind, you should be mindful of it, noting it as "anger, anger, anger". When you have hatred, note it as "hatred, hatred, hatred". When you have aversion, you observe it as "aversion, aversion". When you have ill-will, you observe it as "ill-will, ill-will, ill-will". All these mental states are included in the word *citta*. So *cittānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna* is the most important factor in the four types of mindfulness. However, some meditators do not understand the importance of mindfulness of *citta*, consciousness or mind, and thus they do not try to watch when there is any mental state arising. If a meditator is able to be aware of or be mindful of any mental state arising at that moment, then he or she is sure to liberate the mind from the defilements while he or she is

observing that mental state. At this moment that mental state is free from any *kilesa*, defilement.

When one realises the arising and passing away of that mental state (suppose anger), then one doesn't take the anger to be oneself. One doesn't identify the anger with oneself, with a person, a being, a self, or a soul. One comes to realise that anger is just a mental state. One comes to realise the impermanence of anger; one comes to realise the non-self nature of anger, *anattā*. Then, one won't be attached to the anger or one won't be attached to the mind because one sees it as impermanent or arising and passing away.

Then the Buddha continued:

> "*Saṅkhittaṃ vā cittaṃ 'saṅkhittaṃ cittan'ti pajānāti*' ".

This is in the chapter on *cittānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna* or mindfulness of consciousness. *Saṅkkhitta citta* is sloth and torpor, reluctance to practise meditation, and laziness. If you have laziness in your mind, you observe it as "lazy, lazy". If your mind is depressed, note it as "depression, depression", and if your mind is reluctant, note it as "reluctant, reluctant".

Whatever mental states arise, they must be observed as they are. This is *cittānupassanā*—to liberate the mind from defilements and suffering.

Then again the Buddha said:

> "*Vikkhittaṃ vā cittaṃ 'vikkhittaṃ cittan'ti pajānāti*' ".

Here *vikkhitta* means dissipating thought. It covers all the senses of thinking, wandering, planning, imagining, seeing mental pictures, and so on. So when the mind is wandering, you observe it as "wandering, wandering". When your mind is thinking, you note it as "thinking, thinking". When your mind is planning, you note it as "planning, planning", and so on.

To observe, note, or be mindful of wandering thoughts, thinking, or imagination is the most important factor to make progress in *vipassanā* meditation. When you have these thoughts, you should not fail to note them. In this way, when thoughts are noted or observed, they gradually become less and less. When thoughts become less and less, concentration becomes better and better. When thoughts are not noted, concentration is not good, it becomes weak. Sometimes you are not aware of thoughts which are wandering. You think you are observing the rising-falling or any object of mentality or physicality. But actually your mind is wandering stealthily, planning something, expecting something in the future, recollecting something in the past, and so on. You are not aware of it because you think the mind is with the physical object such as rising-falling or lifting-dropping. Why? Because you do not observe when the thought arises.

When you observe any thought which arises in the sitting as well as the walking, you come to realise the true nature of the thought when your concentration is good enough. The thought is a mental state which is impermanent. It arises and then passes away. But sometimes you think that the thought keeps on going for a very long time. Actually, it is not only one thought but a series of thought processes arising and passing away one after another. This is a thought process, not only one thought moment. A thought doesn't even last a millionth of a second. It arises and instantly passes away. Then, after a previous thought has disappeared, another thought arises and passes away immediately.

But we are not able to discern the thought process. We think that it is only one thought that is everlasting and keeps going on. Thus we identify that thought with me or mine, a person or a being. We think that it is "I" who thinks or "I am thinking about something". Thus the wrong view of a person or a self arises.

In this way, a thought is taken to be a person, a being, or a self. Then the wrong idea of that person or being gives rise to many different defilements such as greed, desire, hatred, anger, and so on. In this way, a thought or the mind is not liberated from

defilements because you do not observe it. When you observe it, you come to realise the thought as a natural process of arising and passing away one after another. Then you won't identify this thought process with yourself, with me or mine, or with a person or a being because you rightly understand it as a process of mentality which is arising and passing away one after another. Then you don't have any defilements in your mind because you are realising or rightly understanding the thought as it really is.

It is very interesting to watch the thought process when it arises, when our concentration is deep enough. We see the thought process as one thought after another appearing and disappearing. We see the impermanence of thought and the suffering of being oppressed by constant arising and passing away. Then we don't have any mental defilements in our mind. In this way, the mind is liberated from defilements.

When our insight into the selfless nature of thought becomes mature, then we realise or experience one insight knowledge after another until we have attained the final stage of insight knowledge. After that the mind changes to enlightenment, *magga ñāṇa* or path knowledge. That enlightenment eliminates some of the defilements. Then the mind is liberated from some of its defilements. In this way, one stage of enlightenment after another uproots the defilements. Eventually, the final stage of enlightenment (arahatta *magga*) uproots all mental defilements completely. Then the mind is completely liberated.

That's why the Buddha said that when a person practises this mindfulness meditation, that is the contemplation of the body as body, contemplation of feelings as feelings, contemplation of mind as mind, and contemplation of phenomena as phenomena, his or her mind becomes detached from everything and it becomes liberated from all mental defilements. Then the person is "a great man" with a liberated mind.

So, I would like you not to fail to observe or watch mental states, good or bad, small or big, that arise in sitting or walking, observing them energetically, attentively, and precisely. Then

you are able to liberate your mind from defilements. Then you can be "a great man" with a liberated mind.

May all of you be able to liberate your mind from all defilements and become "a great man".

The Five Mental Faculties (Part 1)

What are the five mental faculties? The first one is *saddhā* or confidence in the Triple Gem (the Buddha, *Dhamma*, and *Saṅgha*) and especially in the technique of meditation that you are practising now. This *saddhā* must be firm and strong enough for the meditator to put forth strenuous effort in the noting or the observing of phenomena, so that he or she is able to attentively observe the object, either a mental state or a physical process. If any object is noted lightly and superficially, it is not useful. Then the mind goes off very often, wanders and thinks about something else, and the meditator cannot concentrate well on the object.

A meditator needs to have attentiveness in observing each object. To observe or be mindful he or she needs enough effort. That effort or energy is called *viriya* in Pāḷi, and this is also one of the five mental faculties. When that mental effort or energy is strong enough, the meditators can observe whatever arises, either mental states or physical processes, attentively and they will be able to be mindful of whatever arises in their body and mind just as it is.

By being mindful of every mental state or physical process as it really occurs throughout the whole day without a break, the mindfulness becomes gradually continuous, constant, and sustained. When mindfulness is continuous and constant, it becomes

powerful and gives rise to deep concentration. This mindfulness, *sati*, is also one of the five mental faculties. This faculty is very important since it is the source of right understanding of phenomena. When mindfulness becomes continuous and constant to some extent, it gives rise to deep concentration.

Concentration of mind is also one of the five mental faculties. There are three types of concentration: *upacāra samādhi* (access concentration), *appanā samādhi* (absorption concentration or *jhāna* concentration), and *khaṇika samādhi* (momentary concentration). By means of *samatha* meditation the meditator can attain either *upacāra samādhi* or *appanā samādhi*, or both. But the *vipassanā* meditator is not able to attain either of these concentrations but attains *khaṇika samādhi* (momentary concentration) because he or she doesn't take a single object of meditation. Instead, the *vipassanā* meditator takes many varieties of mental states and physical processes as the object of meditation.

So, the mind stays with the object momentarily. Then that object disappears and the mind takes another object and stays with it momentarily, and so on. The observing mind is concentrated on any individual object for a moment. That is why it is called *khaṇika samādhi* or momentary concentration. When this momentary concentration becomes continuous and constant, it has a very great strength which can overcome hindrances and defilements. The subcommentary to the Visuddhimagga said that when *khaṇika samādhi* becomes constant and continuous, it has strength equal to *upacāra samādhi* (access concentration) in *samatha* meditation, so it can overcome hindrances and defilements. To make this momentary concentration deeper we need to have continuous mindfulness and observe whatever arises in our body and mind as it is.

When the mind is well concentrated on any mental state or physical process, there arises intuitive insight which realises its true nature. This is called *vipassanā ñāṇa* or insight knowledge. This insight is called *lokiya paññā. Paññā* is one of the five mental faculties and is of two types. One is the insight knowledge

that realises the impermanent, unsatisfactory, and selfless nature of mental and physical phenomena, this is called *vipassanā paññā*. When we have completed attaining all the stages of insight knowledge, realising mental states or physical processes more and more clearly, then we come to attain enlightenment: *magga ñāṇa* (path knowledge) and *phala ñāṇa* (fruition knowledge). These enlightenment knowledges are also called *paññā* or *lokuttara paññā*. *Lokiya paññā* is mundane wisdom, and *lokuttara paññā* is supramundane wisdom. *Lokiya paññā* is the insight knowledge that realises the specific and general characteristics of phenomena. Every mental state and physical process has its own specific characteristics as well as the three kinds of general characteristics. *Lokiya paññā* realises both the specific and general characteristics of mental and physical phenomena. Lokuttara *paññā*, supramundane wisdom or enlightenment, realises the Four Noble Truths; that is the truth of suffering, the truth of the cause of suffering, the truth of the cessation of suffering, and the truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering.

Both mundane and supramundane wisdom, insight knowledge or enlightenment, are included in the five mental faculties. A meditator must be endowed with these five mental faculties. The five mental faculties are the property of a meditator and each mental faculty should be sharp and powerful.

Confidence, *saddhā*, is a basic requirement. Only when confidence in the technique of *vipassanā* meditation is strong enough, will the meditator put strenuous effort into the practice. Sometimes when meditators experience some stage of insight knowledge, they are happy and have a great deal of pleasure. They gain a great deal of confidence in the teaching of the Buddha through their own personal experience. Then they start to think about their friends and relatives, their parents, sons and daughters. They would like all of them to personally experience this *dhamma*. The meditator comes to think, "How can I persuade them to practise this meditation?" Or "How can they get this opportunity to experience the *dhamma*?" In this way, because of

strong *saddhā* they think about the welfare of others, but then their concentration is broken.

What should such meditators do? Reduce their confidence, *saddhā*? No, because their faith arises not by learning or by listening to *dhamma* but by the personal experience of meditation, so they cannot reduce *saddhā*. Then what should they do? It is easy, not very difficult, but sometimes meditators forget. As you know, the principle of *vipassanā* meditation is to be mindful of whatever arises in your mind and body as it really occurs. So, when any thought comes up, you observe it as "thinking, thinking, thinking" When you have the desire to help your friends experience this *dhamma*, this desire must be noted as "desire, desire, desire" until the desire has disappeared. Sometimes, some meditators feel sad about their departed parents, thinking, "My parents did not practise this meditation, or my parents did not realise the *dhamma*", and so on. In this way, they may cry over the death of their parents. This should also be observed as "thinking, thinking, thinking". If there is sadness, the meditator should observe it as "sad, sad, sad" until that sadness has disappeared.

Meditation, either *samatha* meditation or *vipassanā* meditation, is mental training, mental culture, mental development, or the work of the mind. The work of the mind is to note. To observe the mind is more important than any other thing. So, whatever mental states or whatever emotional states arise, the meditator must observe them attentively, energetically, and somewhat more quickly. When sadness arises, sadness must be observed as "sad, sad, sad". Without noting or labelling, simply being aware of sadness is not enough because that awareness is very light and superficial. It's not deep enough. Noting or labelling helps the mind to focus on the sadness more precisely. Then the meditator comes to realise that the sadness is not a permanent state. Then sadness passes away. In this way, whatever mental states or emotional states arise, they must be observed without fail. When the meditator thinks about friends or parents, that must be observed. If the meditators are about to cry over the death of their parents,

they should note "crying, crying, crying" until that emotion has disappeared and then return to the primary object, the rising and falling of the abdomen.

Sometimes a meditator may feel lazy or reluctant to practise. That laziness or reluctance must be observed as it is, being mindful of it attentively and precisely as it really occurs. Then that laziness will go away. If the meditator does not observe it, that laziness will become stronger and stronger and he or she will not want to continue with the practice. At that moment, concentration is broken. There is no mindfulness at all and then he or she is not a yogi. A meditator is at all times mindful of all actions and movements, of all mental states and physical processes. Only mindfulness makes a person a meditator. If there is no mindfulness, a person is not a yogi. If a meditator has no mindfulness, at that moment it can be said that the yogi is dead, though he or she is walking. Why? The life of a yogi is mindfulness. Mindfulness is the life of a yogi. If there is no mindfulness, even if the meditator is walking or eating breakfast, then he or she is dead. Then we can see that dead yogi eating at the breakfast table.

So, a meditator must be mindful all the time of any mental state arising at that moment or of any physical process arising at that moment. From moment to moment he or she must be mindful of any mental state or physical process as it really occurs. In this way, mindfulness becomes continuous and constant. For the whole day, the meditator doesn't "die" and he or she is "alive" with mindfulness.

So this mindfulness is mental work, mental training, or mental culture. It is very, very important, for it has an unbelievable power to change a personality, to change a mentality, or to change a disposition. As a meditator has higher and higher experiences in meditation, his or her mind, attitude, and disposition will also change for the better.

This mindfulness, *sati*, is one of the five mental faculties and cannot be excessive. *Saddhā*, as I told you, "confidence in the teaching" may be too strong so that the yogi has no mindfulness

at all and thinks about something else. *Saddhā* should be kept in balance with *paññā*, wisdom. Wisdom includes both insight knowledge and theoretical knowledge of the *Dhamma*. According to the meditation texts, concentration is of benefit for *paññā* or insight. The meditator may reflect, "If I have too much confidence, I may go astray. This is not the time for me to enjoy or indulge in this *saddhā*. What I should do is to continue to be mindful of whatever arises in the body and mind as only this is the right way for me to make progress in my meditation". In this way, reflecting upon the disadvantage of too much *saddhā* and the advantage of *viriya*, *sati* and samadhi we can keep *saddhā* in balance with *paññā*. We can check *saddhā* and then we are able to stay with our meditation and concentrate well on our object of meditation, that is, on whatever arises.

In the same way, *viriya*, energy or effort, needs to be strong and strenuous enough. However, sometimes *viriya* may be too strong, stronger than concentration, and this is not desirable. *Viriya* and concentration must be kept in balance. Sometimes, when meditators have too much *saddhā*, they put too much effort into the practice. They want to continue to practice for the whole night, as well as the day. In this way, they may have too much effort or energy. Then they cannot concentrate well on meditation because they may become restless. But it is very rare to find such meditators with too much effort. We should not worry about it.

We have to learn to be more and more aware of all our daily activities in more and more detail as well as to note and observe any mental states such as wandering, thinking, imagining, and so on. Sometimes, the meditators are lazy. Though they have a thought and have realised it, they are too lazy to note it as "thinking, thinking" or "wandering, wandering". They just look at it as it is, then the mind goes out and keeps going on for a very long time. That laziness must be noted. Laziness or any mental state, good or bad, when noted will disappear. But the noting should be attentive and precise enough.

When a meditator has too much effort or when the effort is

too strong, sometimes we have to instruct him or her to note only a few objects, not many objects. Let's say, if the meditator observes four objects as "rising, falling, sitting, touching", then he or she should note only two objects as "rising, falling" calmly and steadily. In walking too, when he or she observes six or seven parts of the step, he or she has to reduce to three or two parts such as, "lifting, pushing, dropping" or "left, right". Some meditators with too much effort become restless and they cannot stay in one place. We have to instruct such meditators to stop their meditation practice and to do some work; some cleaning work or any other work. But as I told you, it is very rare to find such a meditator, so we need not worry about it.

Sometimes concentration is too deep. When the meditator's mind is concentrated very well, he or she feels happy and peaceful, but he or she doesn't realise anything. There are two reasons for this. One is that the meditator is pleased with his or her concentration and has no desire or no tendency to realise any mental state or physical process. That tendency to enjoy deep concentration is one of the reasons why the meditator cannot realise any mental states or physical processes. But the other reason is that because the mind is very deeply concentrated on the object of meditation it is unable to realise any mental state or physical process. Sometimes when the concentration is too deep, it brings the mind into a very awkward position. When a meditator has the tendency to believe in superstition such as the belief or interest in ghosts, *yakkas*, or any other undesirable invisible things, then that deep concentration creates these things because of his tendency. Then he may be afraid of these things, but this is also very rare.

What is happening? When concentration is too deep, the meditator's effort becomes weaker and weaker. Though he or she does not put effort in the noting, the mind is concentrated very well. So gradually, the effort becomes weaker and weaker. Later on, the effort is very, very weak. When the effort or energy is weak, the mind cannot be concentrated well on the object

and so it gets into sleepiness, sloth and torpor. Because of lack of effort, the concentrated mind becomes sluggish and heavy which changes into sleepiness, sloth and torpor. In this case, the meditator has to put more effort into the practice, note more and more objects, so that the mind becomes more and more alert. In this way, excessive concentration should be kept in balance with effort.

Correcting the five mental faculties in a meditator is done by the teacher. If the meditator is not skilled in keeping the five mental faculties in balance, the teacher knows that this meditator has too much *saddhā*, wisdom, effort, or concentration and can assist the meditator in keeping the five mental faculties in balance. So the most important thing is to have firm and strong confidence in the teaching of the Buddha and the technique of meditation and to have constant and continuous mindfulness for the whole day.

May all of you rightly understand the five mental faculties and strive your best to be mindful of every mental state and physical process without failure as long as you are awake. May you attain the cessation of suffering, *Nibbāna*.

The Five Mental Faculties (Part 2)

Yesterday I explained the five mental faculties with which every meditator must be endowed and said that these five faculties must be sharp, powerful, and kept in balance. The Visuddhimagga, the manual of Buddhist meditation, mentions how a meditator can make these five mental faculties stronger, sharper, and more powerful. It mentions nine ways of sharpening these five mental faculties. But we have no time to deal with these nine ways today because we have to repeat some aspects of these five mental faculties.

As you know, the five mental faculties are *saddhā*, *viriya*, *sati*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*.

- *Saddhā*: confidence or faith through right understanding of *dhamma*
- *Viriya*: strenuous effort
- *Sati*: continuous and constant mindfulness
- *Samādhi*: deep concentration
- *Paññā*: insight, enlightenment, wisdom, or understanding

These five mental faculties are also known in Pāḷi as bala which is translated as strengths or powers. So, these five mental

faculties are also those strengths of a meditator which enable him to attain enlightenment and the cessation of suffering.

Paññā can also be translated as knowledge, but *paññā* as knowledge is very weak and superficial. When *paññā* refers to insight and enlightenment, it is profound and deep because this kind of *paññā*, insight or enlightenment, is attained through personal experience in meditation. One cannot attain this kind of *paññā* by learning or theoretical knowledge. In the five mental faculties, this *paññā* mainly refers to insight and enlightenment, but it may also refer to some knowledge or understanding of *Dhamma* and to wisdom.

Saddhā and *paññā* must be kept in balance. Confidence or faith and understanding or knowledge must be kept in balance. Samādhi and *viriya* must be kept in balance. Concentration and effort must be kept in balance. *Sati*, mindfulness, can never be said to be excessive. When confidence or faith, *saddhā*, is stronger then *paññā*, knowledge or understanding, one can easily believe in whatever one is told, or in some system or doctrine, or in some person. One becomes credulous and can readily accept wrong ideas which lead to suffering.

In meditation, when a meditator has some meditative experience, his or her confidence may be heightened. Suppose the meditator comes to very clearly differentiate between the noting mind and the object, the rising and falling movement. The noting mind is one process and the rising movement is another. By observing the rising and falling movement very attentively the meditator may realise through his experiential knowledge that these are two separate processes of mentality and physicality. Then one may judge that what the Buddha taught is right.

When we observe the rising and falling movement, the observing mind or the noting mind is one thing and the thing which is observed, the rising or falling movement, is another. So, these are two separate phenomena, one is mental and the other is physical. If we do not practise this mindfulness meditation and if our concentration on the process of the rising and falling movement

is not good enough, we won't be able to differentiate between mental and physical phenomena in this way. Then we take these dual processes of mental and physical phenomena to be me, a person, a being or a self. Actually, neither of these dual phenomena is a person, a being, or a self. The mental state or the noting mind is the mental process. It is neither a person, a being or a self. The physical phenomena, the rising movement and the falling movement, are also not a person, a being, or a self, but a process of material phenomena or physical phenomena.

Because the meditator comes to differentiate between the object and the subject as two separate processes of mentality and physicality, the meditator is very pleased with his or her experience and with this realisation. He or she feels gratitude to the Buddha who taught this right path leading to the realisation of the true nature of mental and physical phenomena. Reflecting on the Buddha's enlightenment and his compassion for his disciples, the meditator may analyse the *Dhamma*, think about the greatness of the Buddha, and so on. In this way, mindfulness is disturbed and concentration is broken. There is no further progress in meditation because of the lack of mindfulness and weak concentration. That is the disadvantage of *saddhā*, confidence or faith, when it is stronger than knowledge or understanding. So, *saddhā* must be balanced with *paññā*, knowledge.

The meditator should consider, "It's wrong to think about the Buddha's attributes, the Buddha's greatness, or the benefit of the *Dhamma*. It's a kind of a distraction. What I should do is to be mindful of whatever arises as it is. Only mindfulness of what is happening is the right path for me; that is it leads to the cessation of suffering". In this way, *paññā*, knowledge of the *Dhamma* or understanding of the *Dhamma* leads him to the right path. Then *saddhā*, confidence, comes into balance with *paññā* and the meditator continues to be mindful of what is happening in the body and mind as it is. The meditator is on the right path, hopeful of attaining higher stages of insight knowledge, enlightenment, and the cessation of suffering.

When *paññā*, knowledge or understanding of the *Dhamma*, is stronger than *saddhā* or more powerful than *saddhā*, confidence or faith, the meditators may analyse the technique of meditation. They may analyse the doctrine of the Buddha or they may analyse any experience that they have in meditation. They may consult their experience with their theoretical knowledge of the *Dhamma* and what the scriptures say, thinking, "The scriptures say so an so, but I experience this and that. This is not in conformity with what the scriptures say. So, my experience is not in conformity with what the scriptures say". Or, "Its quite right. It's very much in conformity with what the Buddha said". In this way, analysing one's experience becomes a distraction, *uddhacca*. This analytical knowledge and conceptualisation of experience breaks mindfulness and concentration. Then they can't make progress in meditation.

The meditators should then keep in mind that the Omniscient Buddha taught this technique of meditation, mindfulness meditation, through his personal experience of the *Dhamma*; it was not by learning it from another teacher. So it can never be wrong. It is always right. In this way, the meditators can increase faith and confidence in the technique and the doctrine of the Buddha and they no longer need to analyse or think about experiences. All they need to do is to apply the technique. Then, *saddhā* will lead them to the right path by being mindful of whatever is happening at this moment as it is. They will be able to continue their practice by being aware of each and every mental state and physical process arising at that moment as it is. Then the meditators can attain higher stages of insight knowledge, enlightenment, and the cessation of suffering. In this way, *paññā*, knowledge or understanding, should be balanced with *saddhā*.

In the same way, when a meditator is greedy or ambitious to attain enlightenment or to live in peace by uprooting all agitated, negative mental states or defilements, he or she strives to put effort into the practice day and night. The meditator determines, "I must attain enlightenment in a week". Straining to put effort

into the practice, he or she notes the rising or falling movement much too attentively. He or she becomes restless and the mind doesn't go to the object well. The mind is not concentrated and goes astray. The more the mind is distracted, the more effort is put into the noting, and the more distractions come into the mind. Then sometimes, the meditator becomes angry or disappointed with the practice. Though he or she makes such a strenuous effort, he or she can't concentrate the mind on any object of meditation. The meditator may feel hopeless and give up the practice, cry over it, or have a great deal of anger with the practice. This is the disadvantage of too much effort.

Effort should be balanced with concentration. When concentration is lacking, the meditator should do either *mettā* meditation or the recollection of the Buddha's attributes, *buddhānussati bhāvanā*. Then this meditation makes his or her mind calmer and more concentrated. At that time, the meditator can switch to *vipassanā*, but effort must be steady.

Another way for the meditator is not to practise *mettā* or *buddhānussati bhāvanā*, but to continue insight meditation in a more relaxed way, both mentally and physically. The meditator may rest for a while, calming his mind for say ten minutes, fifteen, or thirty minutes, then observe the rising and falling movement very calmly and slowly, keeping in mind, "I won't expect progress. What I should do is to be aware of whatever arises in my body or mind as it is, calmly and steadily". With this attitude he or she should observe the rising and falling movement, calmly, precisely, and not too attentively, noting it as "rising, falling", "rising, falling". The meditator should not be disappointed when the mind goes out because it is natural for the mind to wander. There is no mind that doesn't wander. If we have mind, we have wandering, thinking, and distraction. With this in mind, the meditator should observe the wandering mind as "wandering, wandering, wandering, wandering". Do not follow until the end of the wandering mind but note it about five or six times, then bring the mind back

to the primary object, steadily and calmly noting it as "rising, falling, rising, falling".

In the walking too, one should not note many objects but only note "left, right" or "lifting, dropping, lifting, dropping", or "lifting, pushing, dropping" very precisely and calmly. Three notings are enough, more than that is not needed. Observe the lifting very precisely, perceiving the actual movement of lifting. Then note the pushing forward, observing precisely and closely with relaxation, both mentally and physically, perceiving the actual movement of pushing forward. Then note dropping, being aware of the actual movement of dropping. In this way, with calmness and relaxation and without any expectation of progress observe each movement as "lifting, pushing, dropping" or as "lifting, dropping". Then the mind will gradually become calm and concentrated on the object of meditation and as concentration gains momentum, the meditator will find that he or she is on the right path.

One should learn a lesson here, reflecting, "Because of too much effort, I have got into trouble, so too much effort is not beneficial for me in this meditation. Steady effort and some degree of concentration and constant mindfulness will help me to attain the higher stages of insight", and so on. In this way, too much effort can be checked and can be kept in balance with concentration.

If concentration is stronger than effort, concentration tends to change into sloth and torpor or sleepiness. When the meditator can observe any mental state and physical process very easily and very well, the mind becomes more and more deeply concentrated. Putting forth some effort, concentration becomes deeper and the mind can easily concentrate on any object which is arising at that moment. When the abdomen rises, it is possible to concentrate on it very easily, comfortably and without much effort. Then, because of the very strong concentration, the mental effort becomes gradually reduced until, eventually, there is not enough effort in the noting because of weak effort. The mind

becomes sluggish and heavy and gradually concentration gives way to sloth and torpor. The meditator begins to nod, imitating a chameleon. Why is there nodding? Because concentration is stronger than effort and effort is weak. So the mind becomes sluggish and heavy and changes into sleepiness or drowsiness, sloth and torpor.

What should you do in this situation? Enjoy drowsiness? The Buddha used these two words, *sayasukha* and *middhasukha*. When a person wakes up in the morning and doesn't want to rise but rolls from side to side, that is enjoyment of sleeping, *sayasukha*. But when a meditator feels sleepy in sitting, he or she may not note it attentively as "sleepy, sleepy, sleepy". The meditator knows that the sleepiness will go away if noted attentively and then he or she will not be able to enjoy it. That is called *middhasukha* in Pāḷi, enjoyment of sleepiness or sloth and torpor.

So should you enjoy it or try to overcome it? How can you overcome it? Because your effort in the noting is weak, you feel sleepy, heavy in the mind and the body, too. So, you make more effort, noting it more attentively as "sleepy, sleepy, sleepy, sleepy, sleepy" —like that. Sometimes not mental noting but verbal noting should be done. Yes, verbal noting as "sleepy, sleepy, sleepy, sleepy" —like that. Then the mind becomes stimulated, active, and alert and sleepiness goes away.

Sometimes a meditator is in a situation where he or she is half enjoying and half noting sleepiness, so that he or she cannot put quite enough effort into the noting. The meditator slowly notes "sleepy (pause), sleepy". This sleepiness can be overcome by putting strenuous effort in the noting. This makes the noting more attentive, energetic, and quickly as in "sleepy, sleepy, sleepy" or "drowsy, drowsy, drowsy, drowsy". If this does not cause sleepiness to go away, then the meditator should open his or her eyes and note it as "drowsy, drowsy" or "sleepy, sleepy, sleepy". In this way, he or she is able to overcome the state of sluggishness.

You may experience sluggishness as did the Venerable Moggallāna, the disciple second in rank of the Buddha, when he was

about to attain enlightenment. He attained the first stage of enlightenment, *sotāpatimagga*, stream-entry, after he had heard a short verse summarizing the Buddha's teachings. But for the higher three stages of enlightenment he had to practise meditation. He did so near a village named Kallavāḷaputta in the Māgadha country. He only practised walking meditation, observing the movements of the foot. He experienced the different movements and he also experienced the impermanent, suffering, and selfless nature of the movements of the foot, physical phenomena, and of the mind that noted these movements. But gradually he became tired because he had walked for seven days and he wanted to sit. He went to his seat under a tree, sat down, and practised mindfulness. But in a short time he felt sleepy and drowsy. Though he observed this drowsiness, he couldn't overcome it because this torpor was produced by tiredness. But the Buddha, living in the Veḷuvana monastery, knew the situation of the Venerable Moggallāna's meditation and so he came and sat down on the seat prepared for him. (In the time of the Buddha, every monk prepared a seat for when the Buddha came to encourage him.). So, the Omniscient Buddha came to Moggallāna and sat down on the seat. The Venerable Moggallāna seemed to not wake up but continued to be drowsy and sleepy in front of the Buddha because he was very tired.

Then the Buddha said, "Moggallāna, Moggallāna, are you sleepy?" Only at that moment the Venerable one woke up and his sleepiness disappeared. The Buddha then taught him the seven ways of overcoming sleepiness. This discourse is known as Pacalāyamāna Sutta, but now we don't have time to deal with it in greater detail. One of the ways the Buddha taught Moggallāna was to pull and twist the ear. If you put strenuous effort in the noting and note sleepiness more attentively, energetically, with eyes open, but this doesn't work, then you should pull and twist your ear—so that you may cry over it! Then your mind will be alert and active and sleepiness will surely go.

Sleepiness which is produced by lack of effort and strong con-

centration can be overcome by walking meditation. Do not continue to sit but get up and walk, doing so briskly. Walk strongly and quickly, observing the movement of the body. Do not note "left, right" or "lifting, pushing, dropping", but note "walking, walking, walking". In this way, your effort becomes stronger and sluggishness disappears.

About six or seven years ago when I conducted a meditation retreat in Thailand, two Dutch Buddhist nuns joined the retreat. The younger one reported that early each morning she felt sleepy and couldn't sit or walk very well, and sometimes the mind would go astray. I suggested many ways to overcome this sleepiness but none worked, so I told her, "You should walk backwards to overcome this sleepiness". She chose an area that was good and large, and in only one walking meditation she overcame her sleepiness. She was very pleased. Later, that nun came to my meditation centre in Yangon to continue her practice for about two years. Then she returned to the Netherlands for three months, and later she came back to continue her practice at the meditation centre for another year, and so on. She was very successful.

So the point is that your sleepiness or drowsiness comes from concentration or some other source. What you should do is to put more effort in the noting and note every object, especially sleepiness, more attentively and energetically. Then it will go away. If it doesn't go away, you note it with eyes open and it will go away. If it doesn't, then pull and twist your ears. And if that doesn't work, get up and walk backward. In walking backward, you have to put more effort in the noting and that is why sleepiness goes away.

In this way, the five mental faculties must be kept in balance and you can make progress in your meditation.

The Five Mental Faculties (Part 3)

We will continue our *Dhamma* talk about the five mental faculties, *pañcindriya. Pañca* means five, *indriya* means controlling faculties. *Pañcindriya* means the five controlling faculties of the mind, namely *saddhā*, *viriya*, *sati*, *samādhi*, and *paññā. Saddhā* means faith or confidence. This faith is not ordinary faith but strong and firm faith in the Triple Gem and especially in the technique of mindfulness meditation. *Viriya*, energy or effort, is also not ordinary *viriya.* As to *vipassanā* meditation, the Omniscient Buddha mostly used the word *padhāna* as *viriya. Viriya* is ordinary effort, while *padhāna* is strong or strenuous effort. That is why, when the Buddha taught us the five factors of a meditator, he used the word *padhāniyaṅga* which is a combination of two words. *Aṅga* means factor, *padhāna* means strenuous effort, and *iya* is a person or a meditator. Thus *padhāniya* means a person making strenuous effort. *Padhāniyaṅga* means the factors of a meditator with strenuous effort. So, *viriya* is not ordinary *viriya* but it is *padhāna*, strong or strenuous *viriya.* Thus, the Buddha mentioned *saddhā*, *viriya*, *sati. Sati*, mindfulness, is not weak or poor mindfulness but constant and continuous mindfulness. Then there is *samādhi*, concentration, which must be deep concentration and *paññā*, insight, enlightenment, or wisdom. Or in its ordinary sense, it includes some knowledge of the *Dhamma* or understanding.

So, firm and strong faith, strenuous effort, constant and continuous mindfulness, deep concentration, and insight, enlightenment, or wisdom are the five mental faculties with which a meditator must be endowed. Only if these five mental faculties are sharp, strong, and powerful can the meditator achieve his or her goal of the cessation of suffering.

Saddhā and *paññā*, faith and insight, must be in balance and concentration and effort must also be kept in balance as I explained in the previous talks.

Now I want to explain to you how a meditator attains insight and how insight realises matter and mind, bodily and mental phenomena. When a meditator properly observes the eight precepts, or at least the five precepts, very well, his or her morality is purified. The purification of morality or virtue, *sīla visuddhi*, is conducive to deep concentration. When morality is purified, the mind of the meditator is clear and sharp, so he or she can concentrate on any meditation object very well. Purification of morality is the cause of deep concentration. That is why we need to observe the precepts when we are about to practice any kind of meditation, either *samatha* meditation or *vipassanā* meditation.

With the power of the purification of morality, *samatha* meditators can attain either access concentration, *upacāra samādhi*, or absorption concentration, *appanā samādhi*. Here *appanā samādhi* means *jhāna*, meaning "fixedness". When the mind is well fixed on the object of meditation or completely absorbed in it, it is called *jhāna*. When we say absorption, the Pāḷi word for it is *appanā*.

So, when a *samatha* meditator attains access concentration, *upacāra samādhi*, it is also known as neighbourhood concentration because it is near to absorption concentration or *jhāna* concentration. This means that *jhāna* is preceded by *upacāra samādhi*, access concentration. Only the *samatha* meditator can attain *upacāra samādhi* and *appanā samādhi*. A *vipassanā* meditator cannot attain either of these but attains momentary concen-

tration, *khaṇika samādhi*, which is equal to access concentration in *samatha*.

How can the hindrances in *samatha* concentration be overcome? When a *samatha* meditator attains access concentration, his or her mind is purified from the hindrances or defilements. The hindrances are of five kinds: 1.) sensual desire, 2.) ill will, aversion, anger, or hatred, 3.) sloth and torpor, 4.) restlessness and worry, 5.) sceptical doubt about the Triple Gem. If one of these five hindrances is present in the meditator's mind, he or she cannot concentrate on any object of meditation.

Suppose a meditator has aversion in his or her mind. That aversion hinders his or her concentration which cannot arise because of that aversion or ill will. When the mind is well concentrated on the object of meditation, none of these five hindrances can arise in the mind. So, the concentrated mind overcomes or overwhelms these hindrances. Or we can say, it suppresses them. Then the mind is purified from these hindrances and defilements. This purification of the mind is attained by *samatha* meditation with access concentration or absorption concentration.

But an insight meditator does not attain either access concentration or absorption concentration but attains momentary concentration which has also the ability to overcome or suppress these hindrances, preventing them from arising in the mind.

The subcommentary to the Visuddhimagga said, "Momentary concentration is equal to access concentration in *samatha*, when it is able to overcome these hindrances, to remove these hindrances, or to suppress these hindrances". Though this momentary concentration has the same strength as access concentration, *upacāra samādhi*, it is not called access because the term *upacāra* is given to the concentration in *samatha*, not in *vipassanā* meditation. When this momentary concentration becomes continuous, constant, and uninterrupted, its strength is able to remove all hindrances.

When a *samatha* meditator has attained either access concentration or absorption concentration, his or her mind is purified

from all defilements and hindrances. So, he or she has attained purification of mind. When the mind is purified from all hindrances and defilements, it becomes calm, tranquil, and serene. When this state of calmness or tranquillity is enjoyed by the *samatha* meditator, it is called *jhāna sukha*, the happiness of *jhāna* or the happiness attained through *jhāna* concentration.

But *vipassanā* meditators have to be mindful of whatever arises in body and mind as it really occurs. They have many varieties of mental states and physical processes as the object of meditation. Whatever arises in the mind or body, it must be observed as it is because the purpose of *vipassanā* or insight meditation is to realise the true nature of mental states and physical processes. *vipassanā* meditators do not only take a single object like *samatha* meditators who only take a single object and strive to concentrate the mind well on that object.

The *vipassanā* meditator needs some degree of deep concentration, but not so deep that it hinders him or her from gaining insight and realising mental or physical phenomena. This degree of concentration can be attained by being aware of each mental state or physical process that arises from moment to moment. The mind stays with a mental state for a moment and when that mental state has disappeared, it takes another physical phenomenon or mental state arising at that moment as its object and stays with that object for a moment. In this way, the insight meditator's mind stays with an object momentarily but takes one object after another so that concentration becomes continuous and uninterrupted. So it is able to remove all hindrances and defilements. By means of this momentary concentration the *vipassanā* meditator attains purification of mind, *citta visuddhi*.

When the mind is purified to a large extent, there arises insight that penetrates into the true nature of bodily and mental phenomena. From the moment a *vipassanā* meditator attains purification of mind by means of powerful momentary concentration, he or she realises the true nature of mental states and physical processes that are observed. With the purification of

mind, the *vipassanā* meditator realises the intrinsic nature of mental and physical phenomena in two aspects. One is the aspect of *sabhava lakkhaṇa*, the specific or the individual characteristics. The other is the aspect of *sāmañña lakkhaṇa*, the common or general characteristics.

In the first two stages of insight knowledge, a meditator realises the specific characteristics of the body-mind process, bodily and mental phenomena. Starting from the third stage of insight, he or she realises both the specific characteristics and the general characteristics of bodily and mental phenomena. The specific characteristics belong to each individual mental state and physical or material unit. In other words, each mental state has its own specific or individual characteristics as has each physical process also.

Most of the time when we practice *vipassanā* meditation according to the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta, we have to begin with a physical phenomenon or material phenomenon such as the rising movement and falling movement of the abdomen, the sitting posture and touching sensations, or in-breathing and out-breathing. In the course of our *vipassanā* meditation, we have to be mindful of the most prominent object, either a mental state or a physical process. Since physical phenomena are usually more prominent than mental states, we have to begin with them.

The physical phenomena are mainly composed of the four primary elements, namely *paṭhavī-dhātu*, earth element, *āpo-dhātu*, water element, *tejo-dhātu*, fire element, and *vāyo-dhātu*, air element. Each of these four primary elements has its specific or individual characteristics which must be thoroughly realised by a meditator. This can be done when his or her mind is purified from hindrances or when he or she has attained the purification of mind.

Paṭhavī-dhātu, the earth element, does not refer to earth itself but to its characteristic of hardness and softness. This specific or individual characteristic of the earth element does not belong to any other primary material element or any other mental state.

So, this hardness and softness is called the specific or individual characteristic of the earth element. Then by *āpo-dhātu*, the water element, we do not mean water itself but it refers to the characteristic of fluidity or cohesion. Trickling, fluidity, or cohesion is the specific or individual characteristic of the water element, *āpo-dhātu*. Then *tejo-dhātu*, the fire element, doesn't refer to fire itself but to the specific or individual characteristic of temperature, heat or cold. *Vāyo-dhātu*, the wind or air element, has the characteristic of movement, motion, vibration, and support. If you experience motion, vibration, or the supporting nature in your meditation practice, you are experiencing *vāyo-dhātu*, the wind or air element, and realising its specific or individual characteristic.

According to Buddhist Abhidhamma philosophy, when we say "mental states", a mental state includes consciousness and its mental concomitants. We have to divide mental states into two parts, one is consciousness and the other is mental concomitants or mental associates. Consciousness just knows the object. It does not perceive or memorise the object, feel pleasant or unpleasant about it, or have any desire for it. According to Buddhist philosophy, consciousness just knows the object. In the scriptures, it is said, "*Ārammaṇa vijānana lakkhaṇa citta*". *Citta* means consciousness, *ārammaṇa* means object, *vijānana* means cognizing, and *lakkhaṇa* means characteristic. So, *ārammaṇa vijānana lakkhaṇa citta* means that consciousness has the characteristic of cognizing or knowing an object. It does so when it has contact with the object. As soon as the consciousness cognizes the object, it passes away. But when the object doesn't disappear, another consciousness arises and then passes away. These moments of cognition have concomitants arising together with them called *cetasika*, mental concomitants or mental associates. When a consciousness arises and cognizes an object, there is contact between consciousness and the object. Then there is perception and feeling—pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral—in regard to the object. One of the mental states perceives or memorises the ob-

ject. There is also a mental state which brings to mind the object called *manasikāra*, attention, and another mental state is psychic force, *jīvitindriya*.

These mental states arise together with consciousness when it cognizes an object. When a meditator sees a visual thing such as a flower, then the consciousness cognizes the flower as the object, but it does not know that it is a flower. It just knows that there is an object. Then there are the mental concomitants such as perception, contact, feeling, attention, psychic force, and so on. When a meditator does not note "seeing, seeing, seeing, seeing", then the consciousness together with its mental concomitants takes the object repeatedly and stays with it, though the consciousness arises and passes away one after another. When it stays, say about two or three seconds, consciousness cognizes the object. There is contact and one of the mental factors or mental concomitants feels pleasant or unpleasant in regard to the flower. Attention, *manasikāra*, leads the consciousness together with its mental concomitants repeatedly to the object. When these mental concomitants and consciousness take this object for some time, then the consciousness becomes concentrated on the flower to a certain extent. This concentration is called one-pointedness, *ekaggatā*, which is a sort of weak concentration. Then, the pleasant feeling arises in regard to the object and because of that pleasant feeling there comes about another mental concomitant, namely desire. That mental concomitant then leads to craving and the person wants to have the flower. When the desire is not noted as "desire, desire, desire", then the desire will become more and more powerful and it changes into grasping, called *upādāna*. Grasping here means that the mind holds on to the flower and doesn't let it go. In this way, with desire or grasping mental defilements arise dependent on the consciousness of seeing the flower and the mental concomitants.

Why do these mental defilements arise? Because the consciousness together with its mental concomitants stays with the object for some time, two or three seconds, five or ten seconds.

However, if it doesn't have time enough to stay with the object, no desire or defilement will arise. That's why the meditator has to observe "seeing, seeing, seeing", when he or she sees a beautiful flower, observing the consciousness of seeing the flower. When the mind notes the consciousness of seeing, it is noted that the consciousness of seeing arises and then passes away. After its disappearance the noting mind comes to arise. When the noting mind becomes continuous and strong enough, the consciousness of seeing does not have time enough to stay with the object and then a pleasant or unpleasant feeling does not arise. When there is no pleasant or unpleasant feeling, there will be no desire or aversion regarding this flower. Then it is through insight knowledge together with mindfulness and concentration that the defilements have been removed.

That's why we have to observe whatever we see as "seeing, seeing". Whatever we hear, we have to observe as "hearing, hearing, hearing", and whatever we smell as "smelling, smelling". Whatever we taste has to be observed as "tasting, tasting", or as "chewing, chewing", or as "sweet, sweet" or as "sour, sour". Whatever we touch, we have to observe as "touching, touching", "hardness, hardness", or "softness, softness". Whenever we think, we have to note "thinking, thinking", and so on.

The noting mind cuts off the consciousness of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, or thinking for a moment or for a split second. So the consciousness of seeing or hearing cannot be continuous, and when it is not continuous, it becomes weak. Then the noting mind gradually becomes stronger and stronger, it notes continuously, constantly, and uninterruptedly. Then it becomes more powerful and overwhelms the consciousness of seeing. That consciousness of seeing stops and disappears. There arises no mental defilement, either desire, aversion, jealousy, or anything. That is why we have to observe the consciousness of seeing.

When we note seeing as "seeing, seeing, seeing", sometimes we know the specific characteristic of cognizing or just knowing

the object. This is the realisation of the specific or individual characteristic of consciousness, *citta*. It has 52 mental concomitants that arise together with it dependent on the object.

In Buddhist Abhidhamma, when we say mental states or when we say mind, we include both the consciousness and its mental concomitants. Among the two types of mentality, consciousness has the specific or individual characteristics of cognizing the object. *Lobha*, desire, craving, or attachment, has the characteristic of clinging to the object. *Dosa*, anger, hatred, or aversion, has the specific characteristic of roughness. In this way, when we observe anger that arises at this moment, we come to realise the roughness of anger as its characteristic. When we observe "desire, desire, desire", "craving, craving, craving", or "attachment, attachment, attachment", we come to realise that the consciousness is clinging to the object. We come to realise the specific or individual characteristic of desire, craving, or attachment. That's why we have to observe whatever mental state arises at this moment as it is.

In the same way, we have to deal with physical phenomena. When we observe the rising and falling of the abdomen, when we observe the lifting, pushing, and dropping of the foot, or when we observe the stretching or bending movement of the hand, then with concentration good enough we come to realise the specific or individual characteristic of the wind or air element. When we are able to realise the specific or individual characteristic of a mental or physical phenomenon very clearly, we don't take that phenomenon to be a man or a woman, a person or a being, a self or a soul. Because we realise the characteristics of mental states or physical processes, we can judge that they are neither a person nor a being but just natural processes of mental and physical phenomena.

May all of you rightly understand how you should practise your *vipassanā* meditation, strive your best, and attain the cessation of suffering.

The Four Kinds of Truth

We shall continue with our discourse on the five mental faculties: *saddhā*, *viriya*, *sati*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*. First we should deal with *paññā* which means insight, enlightenment, wisdom, or knowledge. Before I deal with *paññā*, I think I should explain the four kinds of truth in Buddhism.

The first truth is to be realised, the second truth is to be abandoned or removed, the third truth is to be experienced, and the fourth truth is to be developed. The first truth is the *dhamma* that must be realised by a meditator, this is called *pariññā* in Pāḷi. The second truth is the *dhamma* that must be abandoned or removed, this is called *pahātabba* in Pāḷi. The third truth is the *dhamma* that must be experienced by a meditator, this is called *sacchikātabba* in Pāḷi. The fourth truth is the *dhamma* that must be developed, this is called *bhāvetabba* in Pāḷi.

When the meditators have thoroughly realised the first truth, they will be able to remove the second truth. When they have abandoned the second truth, they can experience the third truth. To experience the third truth, the meditators must remove the second truth. To remove the second truth, they must realise the first truth. To realise the first truth, they must develop the fourth truth.

In other words, if the meditators have fully developed the fourth truth, they are sure to realise the first truth. And if they have realised the first one, then they are sure to abandon the

second truth. When they have removed the second truth, they are sure to experience the third one.

So the point is that the first truth which is nothing but *nāma* and *rūpa*, mental and physical phenomena, must be thoroughly realised by the meditator. The second truth which must be removed is *taṇhā*, attachment. The third truth which must be experienced is the cessation of suffering or liberation. The fourth truth which must be fully developed is the Noble Eightfold Path.

Why do we need to realise the first truth, *nāma* and *rūpa* or the body-mind process? Because *nāma* and *rūpa*, the body-mind process, is the truth of suffering. All mental states and all physical phenomena are suffering from the point of view of the meditator who wants to get rid of suffering.

The Buddha said, "All five aggregates of grasping are suffering". All the five aggregates means the aggregate of *rūpa* or physical phenomena, *rūpakkhandha*, the aggregate of feeling, *vedanākkhandha*, the aggregate of perception, *saññākkhandha*, the aggregate of mental formations, *saṅkhārakkhandha*, and the aggregate of consciousness, *viññāṇakkhandha*.

When the Buddha delivered the first sermon "Setting in Motion the Wheel of *Dhamma*" or the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta, he described the truth of suffering:

> "*Jātipi dukkhā, jarāpi dukkhā, vyādhipi dukkhā, maraṇampi dukkhaṃ, soka paridevadukkhadomanassupāyāsāpi dukkhā. Appiyehi sampayogopi dukkho, piyehi vippayogopi dukkho, yampicchaṃ na labhati tampi dukkhaṃ. Saṅkhittena pañcupādānakkhandhā dukkhā*".

Jātipi dukkhā, birth is suffering. *Jarāpi dukkhā*, ageing is suffering. *Vyādhipi dukkhā*, sickness is suffering. *Maraṇampi dukkhaṃ*, death is suffering. *Soka* (worry, sadness), *parideva* (lamentation), *dukkha* (pain), *domananassa* (grief), *upāyāsa* (despair), all these are also *dukkha*, suffering. *Appiyehi sampayogopi*

dukkho, to associate with an unbeloved one is suffering. *Piyehi vippayogopi dukkho*, to be separated from a beloved one is suffering. *Yampicchaṃ na labhati tampi dukkhaṃ*, not to get what one wants is suffering.

Then, in one sentence the Buddha summarised all this suffering:

"*Saṅkhittena pañcupādānakkhandhā dukkhā*".

"In short, all the five aggregates of grasping are suffering". Birth, ageing, sickness, sadness, worry, pain, and grief are all included in the five aggregates. That's why the Buddha said, "In short, all the five aggregates of grasping are suffering". So, all kinds of suffering in the world are summarised in the five aggregates. In other words, all kinds of suffering in the world can be divided into two types: one is mental suffering and the other is physical suffering. That is all. When mental suffering and physical suffering are divided into five kinds, they become the five aggregates of grasping. They are the aggregate of physical phenomena, *rūpakkhandha*, the aggregate of feeling, *vedanākkhandha*, the aggregate of perception, *saññā-kkhandha*, the aggregate of mental formations, *saṅkhārakkhandha*, and the aggregate of consciousness, *viññāṇakkhandha*.

Nāma, mentality, consists of four aggregates and *rūpa*, physicality, consists of only one aggregate. The other four aggregates are included in *nāmakkhandā*, the aggregate of mentality. Feeling is mentality, perception is mentality, mental formations are mentality, and consciousness is mentality. These four aggregates are mental phenomena.

In my previous talk, I briefly explained consciousness and its associates. Consciousness has the characteristic of cognizing an object. It just cognizes the object and it doesn't do any more than that. There are fifty-two mental concomitants or associates that arise together with consciousness in accordance with the object. Not all the fifty-two concomitants or mental associates arise

together with consciousness, but only some of them arise together with consciousness depending on the object and depending on the mental attitude of the person. Among the fifty-two mental associates or mental concomitants feeling and perception are also included. Of the fifty-two concomitants, the Buddha classified feeling as a separate aggregate, *vedanākkhandha*, and in the same way, perception forms a separate aggregate, *saññākkhandha*.

The remaining fifty mental associates or concomitants are called the aggregate of mental formations, *saṅkhārakkhandha*. Among these are contact, volition, psychic force, attention, craving, lust, greed, hatred, anger, aversion, ignorance, conceit, jealousy, pride, sloth and torpor, restlessness and worry, moral shamelessness and moral fearlessness. Actually, for you to make progress in your meditation, I need not explain these things in detail, but I would like you to have some knowledge of them. These five aggregates which are summarised into *nāma* and *rūpa*, mentality and physicality, are the truth of suffering which must be thoroughly realised by a meditator.

Straight away we can say that these aggregates of the body and mind are the truth of suffering which must be thoroughly realised by us. That's why we have to watch any mental state or physical process arising as it is. We have to be mindful of all mental states or physical processes as they really are with the purpose of realising their true nature. Though we are not aware of it, these mental states and physical processes which constitute the so-called person, being, or self are suffering. So, we may not accept that *lobha*, the desire to be wealthy, famous, or powerful, is suffering; but actually it is so. Why? This desire arises and passes away. When desire arises in us abundantly or intensely, we feel uneasy in the mind as well as in the body. That is suffering. Because of the desire to be wealthy, we have to work hard day and night to earn a great deal of money and this is also suffering both mentally and physically.

Buddhism is neither optimism nor pessimism, but realism. We must see reality as it really is. In other words, we must see

suffering as it is, or we must see suffering as suffering. Only when we thoroughly realise any mental or physical phenomena as suffering, will we want to get rid of suffering and seek ways and means to do this. When we search for ways and means, we find them because the Omniscient Buddha, based on his personal experience, taught us how a person can be free from suffering.

If we don't realise suffering as suffering, we won't get rid of suffering. Then we will be struggling in the ocean of suffering. Sometimes the term "the ocean of suffering" is used in the scriptures. The whole world is an ocean of both mental suffering and physical suffering. That's why the Buddha said that the first truth, the truth of suffering, *dukkha sacca*, is to be thoroughly realised, *pariññeyya*. When this *dukkha sacca*, truth of suffering, is thoroughly realised, we can be free from it. But to be free from it, we have to find out what causes it. Then we come to rightly understand that the cause of mental or physical suffering is *taṇhā*, attachment.

This *taṇhā* covers all forms of desire, greed, lust, craving, attachment, grasping, love, and so on. When we say *taṇhā*, we include the meaning of all these words. So this *taṇhā* is the cause of suffering. We rightly understand why the Buddha taught that *taṇhā* causes all kinds of suffering. *Taṇhā* is the immediate cause of suffering. Why does *taṇhā* arise? Why does attachment to mentality and physicality arise? What is the cause of attachment? The cause of attachment is ignorance, ignorance of *dukkha sacca*, the truth of suffering. Ignorance of both mental and physical phenomena causes attachment to arise. Attachment, *taṇhā*, is the immediate cause of suffering and ignorance is the original cause of suffering. If we do not want to suffer, we must eliminate its cause. What is the cause of suffering? The immediate cause is attachment and the original cause is ignorance. Only when we are able to remove the original cause, will the immediate cause, *taṇhā*, no longer arise. When the immediate cause has been destroyed, no suffering at all will arise and we get free from suffering.

How do we remove the original cause of suffering, ignorance? Ignorance is called *avijjā*, or *moha* in Pāḷi. (These two words are sometimes translated as "delusion" which is also sometimes suitable for *moha*). Ignorance or not understanding the truth of suffering, mental and physical phenomena, is the original cause of suffering. When we are able to replace ignorance, *avijjā*, with *vijjā* which is "realisation" or "right understanding", we can eliminate the original cause of suffering. Here we need to realise *nāma* and *rūpa* or to rightly understand the dual process of mentality and physicality. Then ignorance can be removed and the original cause of suffering will no longer arise.

When we realise *nāma* and *rūpa*, mental and physical phenomena, we rightly understand them in two aspects which I will briefly explain. One is *sabhava lakkhaṇa*, the specific or individual characteristics of *nāma* and *rūpa*, mental and physical phenomena. The other aspect is the general or common characteristics of *nāma* and *rūpa*, mental and physical phenomena. These two aspects of *dhamma* are very important to be realised by a meditator. This can be done with deep concentration which is caused by constant and continuous mindfulness and can be obtained by strenuous effort. In a previous talk, I explained the specific or individual characteristics of the four primary elements which are earth, water, fire, and air. I also explained that every mental state and physical process has its own specific characteristic.

The general characteristics refer to the characteristics which belong to all mental and physical processes. They are nothing but *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā*; impermanence or transience, suffering or unsatisfactoriness, and selflessness, no-soul, or no-self. These three characteristics are known as *sāmañña lakkhaṇa*, the general or common characteristics of mental and physical phenomena. Every mental state such as *dosa*, hatred, *moha*, ignorance or delusion, *lobha*, desire or craving, *thīna middha*, sloth and torpor, and *uddhacca kukkucca*, restlessness and worry, has these characteristics.

In this way, any mental concomitant or mental state, includ-

ing consciousness, has its own specific characteristic. When a meditator realises or rightly understands mental or physical phenomena, first of all he or she experiences these specific characteristics. The general or common characteristics, *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anattā* (impermanence, suffering, selflessness), are rightly understood after he or she has realized the first aspect, namely the specific characteristics. But only when a meditator has clearly understood or experienced these three general characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and selflessness of mental and physical phenomena is his or her meditative experience in progress.

vipassanā or insight meditation means the realisation or right understanding of these three general or common characteristics. So, it is only at the third stage of insight knowledge that a meditator begins to rightly understand these three characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and selflessness. However, the non-self nature of mental or physical phenomena is realised from the first stage of insight knowledge, but not clearly or fully.

When you observe a painful sensation, it means that you are mindful of *vedanākkhandha*, the aggregate of feeling. This aggregate must be thoroughly realised as it really occurs. So when a meditator feels a painful sensation, he or she is fortunate! The meditator has a good opportunity to realise the true nature of *vedanākkhandha*, the aggregate of feeling. He or she is presented with a good opportunity to rightly understand the specific characteristic of pain and also the general characteristics of pain, that is to understand *vedanākkhandha*, the aggregate of feeling, and to see its impermanence, suffering, and selfless nature. So, the pain is not to be feared but to be loved. A meditator must love the pain. It is his or her friend and that's why he or she needs to love it.

In ancient times, that is around the ninth century in Sri Lanka, Buddhism was flourishing so the commentators said that Sri Lanka was "covered with the colour of robes" and that there was no place where there was not an *arahant*. At that time, a senior monk who was practising *vipassanā* meditation fell sick

with bad wind and stomach cramps. He noted and observed the painful sensations, but they gradually grew more intense. He strove his best to observe the pain, noting it as "pain, pain, pain", but eventually he could no longer bear it. He was moaning and rolling this way and that way on the bed without mindfulness.

Then one of his disciples who I think must have been an *arahant* said to the senior monk, "Venerable sir, you are a good meditator. You need not give in to this pain. You should strive to love it. By observing the pain and realising its true nature you may make progress in your meditation". The senior monk was ashamed to be told by his disciple to go on with his practice, so he continued to note the painful sensation, being patient with it and noting it as "pain, pain, pain". Because he attentively watched the pain, his mind became more and more deeply concentrated so that it penetrated into the pain. Because of deep concentration, insight knowledge arose and realised the unpleasantness of the pain as one wave of unpleasant sensation arising and passing away one after another.

In this way, he came to realise the general characteristics of the painful sensation, the arising and passing away of sensation. At that moment, because he realised that this was just an unpleasant sensation which was ever-changing or arising and passing away, he didn't take that pain to be me or mine, a person or a being. The pain was something separate from himself and he had lost the location of the pain. What he realised at that moment was that there was just an unpleasant sensation arising and passing away or waves of unpleasant sensations arising and passing away. He realised one layer of sensation after another arising and passing away. When he realised the severity of the pain, he rightly understood it as the specific characteristic of *dukkhavedanā*, painful sensation. In the scriptures, it is said,

> "*Aniṭṭhaphoṭṭhabba … nupavanna lakkhaṇa dukkha*".

This means, "Painful sensation has as its characteristics the

experience of undesirable, tangible things". So, the meditator comes to realise the specific characteristic of the pain first of all. After striving to observe the pain, he or she comes to realise the general characteristics: the appearance and disappearance of the painful sensation which is impermanence, its suffering, and its selflessness by seeing that it is just a phenomenon of feeling.

In a short time his meditative experience progressed through the various stages, so he finally attained *arahantship* and was enlightened. Then the painful sensation had also gone. He had become an *arahant* and had experienced the cessation of suffering, the third truth, *nirodha sacca*, which must be experienced.

Why was he able to experience the third truth, the cessation of suffering? Because he had fully developed the fourth truth, the Noble Eightfold Path. The Noble Eightfold Path, as you know, includes *sammā diṭṭhi*, right understanding. He rightly understood the pain. He abstained from wrong speech, wrong deed, and wrong livelihood through *sammā sankappa*, right thought, *sammā vācā*, right speech, *sammā kammanta*, right deed, and *sammā ājīva*, right livelihood. Then he strove his best and put enough effort into the noting. That effort was *sammā vāyāma*. Then the mind was very sharply mindful of the pain. That mindfulness was *sammā sati*. The mind was very concentrated on the painful sensation. That concentration was *sammā samādhi*.

The eight factors of the noble path were included in his observing of the pain. Because he had finally developed the Noble Eightfold Path he came to realise the First Noble Truth, the truth of suffering, in its two aspects—first the specific characteristics and then the general characteristics. Here the truth of suffering in regard to the unpleasant feeling was thoroughly realised by him.

He didn't take this painful sensation to be me or mine, a person or a being. He just saw it as a natural process of mental and physical phenomena that are ever-changing and arising and passing away. Attachment did not arise because he didn't take the painful sensation to be a person or a being. The realisation of

the specific and general characteristics of the painful sensation had removed attachment, *taṇhā*, the second truth which must be abandoned. Then, because there was no *taṇhā*, suffering did not arise. He experienced the cessation of suffering, the third truth, *nirodha sacca*. The second truth is *samudaya sacca*, the cause of suffering. The third truth is *nirodha sacca*, the cessation of suffering. So here the senior monk had a very good key to open the door of *Nibbāna*, the third truth of the cessation of suffering. What was that key? It was painful sensation. That's why I said that if a meditator has a painful sensation, he or she is very fortunate to possess the best key to open the door of *Nibbāna*. But the meditator needs a great deal of patience so that he or she can observe the painful sensation.

You may also be the person or meditator who can attain the cessation of suffering or the deliverance from suffering using the key of painful sensation. Then, shall I ask you a question? Is the pain to be loved or feared? It is to be loved. You must love it and then you have a lover in every sitting.

May all of you rightly understand how painful sensations can help you attain the cessation of suffering and may you strive your best to attain *Nibbāna*, liberation.

Dependent Origination (Part 1)

Yesterday we briefly dealt with the Four Noble Truths and I explained how a meditator realises the first truth, the truth of suffering, through his or her personal experience or direct experience of *dhamma*. Today we will continue with this topic. Nobody wants to have any suffering at all. Each and everyone wants to be happy and peaceful.

This suffering, *dukkha*, has three forms: *dukkha dukkha*, *vipariṇāma dukkha*, and *saṅkhāra dukkha*. All of these three forms of *dukkha* arise from both mental and physical phenomena, *nāma* and *rūpa*. We should analyse how these *nāma* and *rūpa* arise. According to Buddhist philosophy *nāma* and *rūpa*, mental and physical phenomena, constitute a so-called person or a being.

How then does this person or being come to exist? Anyone who is attached to existence is subject to rebirth. Because of that attachment for existence one is reborn again. When one takes rebirth, that rebirth consists in *nāma* and *rūpa*, mental and physical phenomena. These mental and physical phenomena which are taken to be a person, a being, or a self arise dependent on attachment.

How does attachment arise? Attachment, *taṇhā*, arises dependent upon feeling, *vedanā*. When there arises an unpleasant feeling in a person, he or she wants to have a pleasant feeling or the person has a desire to feel a pleasant feeling. Because of

an unpleasant feeling, there arises a desire for a pleasant feeling. This desire leads to some wholesome or unwholesome actions. A wholesome action is called *kusala kamma*, and an unwholesome action is called *akusala kamma.* So, that wholesome action or unwholesome action is caused by attachment. This attachment is actually regarded as grasping. When attachment is weak, it is called *taṇhā*, but when it becomes stronger and stronger, it is called grasping, *upādāna.* Because one grasps, one takes rebirth.

In order to have rebirth or to be reborn, a person performs wholesome or unwholesome actions. Unwholesome actions produce rebirth in woeful states of existence or a miserable life, while wholesome actions produce a good or luxurious life. Because of wholesome deeds or actions a person is reborn in the higher worlds such as the human or celestial realms. Because of unwholesome deeds or actions a person is reborn in a lower world such as the animal, hell, or hungry ghosts realms. Both higher and lower existences consist in *nāma* and *rūpa*, mental and physical phenomena. These *nāma* and *rūpa*, mental and physical phenomena, arise dependent upon either wholesome actions or unwholesome actions which are called *kamma.*

That *kamma* arises dependent upon on grasping which is strong attachment or powerful attachment. That grasping or *upādāna* arises dependent upon weak attachment, *taṇhā*, which in turn arises dependent upon feeling: pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral. That feeling arises dependent on the contact between the six sense doors and the six sense objects. The six sense doors are, as you know, eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. The six sense objects are visual things, audible things, smell, odour or scent, taste, tangible things, and mind objects. When the eye contacts a visible object, there arises eye consciousness. Eye consciousness is a direct translation of the Pāḷi word *cakkhu viññāṇa.* Eye means *cakkhu*, consciousness means *viññāṇa.* Here, eye consciousness means the consciousness of vision or seeing. Because there is the eye and a visible object, contact between the two arises. Then there arises the consciousness of seeing the visible object. That

consciousness of seeing the visible object is called *cakkhu viññāṇa*, eye consciousness.

When the consciousness of seeing arises, as I told you in my previous talk, there are some mental concomitants or mental associates, *cetasika*, that arise together with that consciousness such as feeling, perception, attention, volition, psychic life, and one-pointedness. If one of the mental factors that arises together with the consciousness judges the object as good, there arises a pleasant feeling. When that mental factor judges it to be bad, there arises aversion or anger or an unpleasant feeling. Because of a pleasant feeling, there arises attachment to the object. Because of an unpleasant feeling, there arises a desire to have a pleasant feeling. The desire is the same as attachment. Then the attachment, *taṇhā*, arises dependent upon pleasant or unpleasant feeling, *vedanā*, which itself arises dependent on the contact between six sense doors and six sense objects.

How then do the six sense doors arise? They arise dependent upon an incessant process of mental and physical phenomena. Only when we have the process of *nāma* and *rūpa*, there arises eye, ear, nose, tongue, and so on. The eyes contact a visible object, when there is such an object. The ear contacts an audible object, when there is an audible object, and so on. In this way, the six sense doors cause the contact to arise, so the six sense doors are the cause of contact. The six sense doors arise dependent upon *nāma* and *rūpa*, the process of mental and physical phenomena which themselves arise dependent upon the first consciousness of existence. We call it *paṭisandhi citta* or rebirth consciousness. With the arising of rebirth consciousness together with its material phenomena, then there is the arising of the process of another consciousness and the process of another physical phenomenon. So, an incessant process of mental and physical phenomena arises dependent upon the first consciousness of an existence which is rebirth consciousness. It is called *paṭisandhi viññāṇa*.

Then that rebirth consciousness arises dependent upon on a wholesome or unwholesome action, called *saṅkhāra*. When these

actions are not associated with attachment, no person will be reborn because there is no attachment to another existence. When actions or deeds are not associated with attachment, there is no rebirth as the result, although there are wholesome or unwholesome actions or deeds. Only when these actions are associated with attachment, will there be rebirth. Here "associated" means that the actions are sometimes preceded by attachment, or sometimes the actions are done together with attachment.

Though the actions are done together with attachment, the cause of these actions is grasping which is strong attachment. Why does this attachment arise? Because the person is ignorant of the suffering in existence. If we have existence, that existence is composed both of mental and physical phenomena. When we have any mental and physical phenomena, we are sure to have suffering because neither mental phenomena nor physical phenomena are permanent. They arise and then instantly pass away. Thus, the so-called "existence" or "life" refers to the processes of ever-changing phenomena that do not even last a millionth of a second. This is called *saṅkhāra dukkha*, the suffering caused by constant arising and passing away. But we do not realise that life consists of ever-changing phenomena, so we take this life to be permanent, at least until we die. Because we are ignorant of this state of mental and physical phenomena we want to be reborn. We have attachment to rebirth. Because of this ignorance, *avijjā* in Pāḷi, there arises this attachment and there arise the actions which result in being reborn. These actions, either wholesome actions or unwholesome actions, are called *saṅkhāra*. Therefore, it is said *avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*. This means that a wholesome action or an unwholesome action arises dependent on ignorance together with attachment.

Then that wholesome action or unwholesome action produces rebirth which means the first consciousness of another existence together with its physical phenomena. So those actions are called *saṅkhāra*, and that first rebirth consciousness is called *viññāṇa*; therefore, *saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇaṃ*. Rebirth consciousness

arises dependent upon the actions done in the previous existence. The actions which were done in the previous existence are the cause and the rebirth consciousness in the next existence is the result or effect.

When there is a rebirth consciousness, after its passing away naturally there are the processes of many different consciousnesses arising and passing away and there are physical phenomena too. In this way, there is an incessant process of mental and physical phenomena, *nāma* and *rūpa.* In Pāḷi, it is *viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpaṃ.* Mental and physical phenomena arise dependent on the first consciousness which we call *paṭisandhi citta* or rebirth consciousness. When we have this incessant process of several consciousnesses and mental phenomena, then there arise eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind, the six sense doors or the six sense bases. These six sense doors or bases are called *salāyatana.* Here we have *nāmarūpa paccayā salāyatanaṃ* which means that the six sense doors or bases arise dependent upon these incessant processes of mental and physical phenomena. When we have six sense doors, the eye contacts a visible object, the ear contacts an audible object, sound or voice, the nose contacts smell, the tongue contacts taste, the body contacts tangible objects, and the mind contacts mind objects. Because of this contact there arises consciousness of seeing, consciousness of hearing, consciousness of smelling, consciousness of tasting, consciousness of touching, and consciousness of mind objects. That contact, *phassa* in Pāḷi, arises dependent on the six sense doors, *salāyatana.* So, it is said *salāyatana paccayā phasso.*

The six sense doors cause contact to arise. When there is contact with the object, there is feeling—pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral—that arises dependent upon contact. So it is called *phassa paccayā vedanā.* Because of contact, there arises feeling. When there is feeling, there arises desire, craving, lust, love, or attachment towards the object; either visible object, audible object, smell, taste, tangible thing, or mind object. So feeling is the cause of attachment or desire, *taṇhā.* It is called *vedanā paccayā*

taṇhā. Taṇhā or attachment is conditioned through feeling. Feeling causes desire or attachment to arise. Because the meditator does not observe and note it, the desire or attachment grows stronger and stronger which means that it doesn't disappear. That state of attachment is called grasping, *upādāna*, thus *taṇhā paccayā upādānaṃ*. This *upādāna*, grasping, arises dependent on attachment, *taṇhā*.

Then, because of that strong attachment to a visible thing, an audible object, rebirth, or another existence, the person performs some wholesome actions or unwholesome actions in order to have the object or another existence. These actions arise dependent upon grasping, *upādāna*. It is called *upādāna paccayā bhavo*. Here *bhava* means action, that is a wholesome or an unwholesome action. It is called *kamma bhava*. Then that wholesome or unwholesome action produces rebirth consciousness in the next existence.

A wholesome action or an unwholesome action in the previous existence is the cause of rebirth consciousness in the next existence. But none of these actions or mental states transmigrate to another existence. Any verbal actions or physical actions together with *cetana* (volition, motive) arise and pass away, but there is a kammic force. It means that the force of the action remains in the process of consciousness. When it is powerful, this force produces rebirth consciousness or the first consciousness in the next existence. None of the mental states or physical phenomena are permanent as they arise and pass away instantly. But there is this force of volition or action in the process of the following consciousness. When the last consciousness of the previous existence has disappeared, that kammic force produces rebirth consciousness in another existence. What we should notice here is that none of the mental phenomena or physical phenomena transmigrate to another existence. They arise and pass away in the previous existence, but there is this force. It is called kammic force. This force produces the rebirth consciousness in the next existence by the power of attachment.

Then there is rebirth consciousness. That rebirth is called *jāti*. *Jāti* is caused by the wholesome or unwholesome actions, *kamma bhava*, in the previous existence. With this *jāti*, rebirth, there arises these incessant processes of consciousness and physical phenomena. Every phenomenon has three stages, namely arising, decay, and passing away. So *jāti* causes decay, *jarā*, to arise. Then eventually *jarā* causes that existence to disappear or cease. Then we say that a person is reborn and then dies.

That death is *maraṇa*. Decay and death are caused by birth, *jāti paccayā jarāmaraṇaṃ*. People will not die unless they are reborn, and because they are born, they are subject to death. One is born, so eventually one has to die. Before dying a person's mental and physical phenomena decay. This decay, *jarā*, and death, *maraṇa*, are caused by *jāti*, so it is said *jāti paccayā jarāmaraṇaṃ*. Then before the person dies, he or she is beset by many varieties of suffering: worry and sorrow, *soka*, anxiety and lamentation, *parideva*, or physical pain, *dukkha*. These sufferings arise because of disease, illness, weather, food, or for any other reasons. Then *domanassa*, grief or sadness, arises dependent on many events in his or her life. There is also *upāyāsa*, despair. The person feels despair because he or she can't cope with life. These states of sorrow, worry, pain, grief, lamentation, sadness, and despair all arise dependent on rebirth. Because a person is born he or she has these innumerable kinds of *dukkha*. If one is not reborn, one won't have any of this suffering, *dukkha*.

Before I continue to explain the three kinds of *dukkha*, I should mention the Pāḷi words:

> "*Jāti paccayā jarāmaraṇaṃ*—Rebirth is the cause, ageing and death are the effect".
>
> "*Sokaparidevadukkhadomanassupāyāsā sambhavanti*—Sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are also caused by rebirth".

Then the Buddha continued to say,

> "*Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hoti*—Thus arises this whole mass of suffering".

In other words, "In this way, a great heap of suffering arises in life". So, life means a train of suffering, but we are ignorant of it. We delude ourselves that life is permanent, when no mental and physical phenomenon is permanent. Then, we take this person, self, or soul to be permanent and everlasting because we don't understand the instantaneous and constant arising and passing away of mental and physical phenomena that constitute the so-called existence. We are attached to existence and that attachment causes existence. From the very first consciousness of an existence until the last consciousness of that existence we are continually suffering, both mentally and physically.

I think you have grasped this summary of the law of causal relations called "dependent origination", *paṭicca samuppāda*. At the end of his exposition the Buddha said that in this way a great heap of suffering arises according to the law of conditionality or causal relations which is basically the law of cause and effect.

All of these sufferings are explained by the Buddha as three types, or *dukkha* is classified in three groups. The first is *dukkha dukkha*, the second is *vipariṇāma dukkha*, and the third is *saṅkhāra dukkha*. *Dukkha dukkha* means "suffering of suffering" or "common suffering", because it is easily perceived by sentient beings as mental and physical suffering. Mental suffering such as sadness, worry, sorrow, anxiety, depression, dejection, disappointment and physical suffering such as pain, stiffening, itching, numbness, any kind of physical disease, any accident, hurt or harm to physical phenomena are easily perceived and very evident to any living being.

Then the second type is *vipariṇāma dukkha*, suffering produced by change. It refers to the so-called happiness, *sukha*. Happiness is regarded as *sukha* not *dukkha*, but actually that happiness does not last long. It arises and passes away and changes

into suffering in a short time, so it is called suffering produced by change.

The third type of suffering is *saṅkhāra dukkha*, the suffering produced by constant arising and passing away of phenomena. Whatever phenomenon there is, mental or physical, it arises and instantly passes away. It doesn't even last a millionth of a second. When a meditator with his or her sharp insight penetrates into the constant arising and passing away of either mental states or physical processes, he or she realises it to be bad, *dukkha*, suffering. The meditator doesn't take it to be good because he or she sees it ever-changing, constantly arising and passing away.

Sometimes the meditators experience a happy feeling which is based on an emotional state. Then they note it as "happy, happy, happy". Because their meditation is good and their concentration is good insight arises very clearly. Because of this they are happy, so they note "happy, happy, happy". When concentration on the happiness is deep enough, they come to realise that the happiness does not last long. The happiness arises, then they note it and so it passes away. In this way, with every noting the happiness passes away and they come to realise, "This is *dukkha*, suffering, the incessant and constant arising and passing away of the phenomena". Then they come to realise that any mental state or physical process is not permanent. They are transient, so they are suffering.

Meditators must realise this *saṅkhāra dukkha*, not only *dukkha dukkha* and *vipariṇāma dukkha*. That's why in the commentary the word *dukkha* is explained in this way, "Dukkha here means the nature of being oppressed by incessant and constant arising and passing away".

This is *dukkha*, one of the three general characteristics. The first characteristic is impermanence. It is very easily perceived when the meditator's concentration is good enough. The second characteristic is *dukkha* which covers all the three types of *dukkha*. So, only when a meditator penetrates into *saṅkhāra dukkha*, the nature of being oppressed by constant and instant arising and

passing away of phenomena, he or she won't have any idea of I or you, me or mine, a person, a being, or a self. Then the meditator does not find any person, any being, or any everlasting self or soul. He or she comes to realise *anattā*, selflessness, non-self, or no-soul. Only then will he or she not be attached to any mental states or physical states that constitute a so-called person or being.

May all of you rightly understand the chain of existence and stream of suffering and strive your best to get rid of it.

Dependent Origination (Part 2)

In our previous talk, we dealt with dependent origination or the law of causal relation, *paṭicca samuppāda cakka*. *Paṭicca samuppāda* means the law of causal relation, and *cakka* means wheel. So the expression is translated as "the wheel of causal relation" or "the wheel of dependant origination". When a causal condition occurs, there arises an effect, and that effect itself becomes a condition and cause. In this way, the train of cause and effect never ends but continues as the cycle of dependent origination. That is why it is called *paṭicca samuppāda cakka*, the wheel of dependent origination.

If we are on this wheel of dependent origination, how can we get off it? The Buddha said that it is ignorance that makes a living being continue around the wheel of dependent origination. If ignorance is replaced by right understanding or wisdom, then we can break this cycle at that link and get off the wheel.

What we should do to be free from this wheel of dependent origination is to acquire wisdom—insight and enlightenment. However, any wisdom acquired through learning, thinking, or reasoning is not conducive to our liberation from the cycle of dependent origination. Only the wisdom acquired through the direct experience of *nāma* and *rūpa*, mental and physical phenomena, which constitute the so-called person or being and which also

constitute the wheel of dependent origination can cut through this cycle and enable us to get off the wheel.

That's why the Buddha said that the first truth, the truth of suffering, *dukkha sacca*, is *pariñ*ñ*eyya* and it must be thoroughly realised and rightly understood. The wheel of dependent origination consists in both *nāma* and *rūpa*, mental and physical phenomena which are the truth of suffering. If we are able to rightly understand one of the links of this wheel of dependent origination, we are sure to cut through it and get off the wheel.

The wheel of dependent origination consists in both mental and physical phenomena. In other words, we can say that the wheel of this dependent origination are the five aggregates—the aggregate of physical phenomena, the aggregate of feeling, the aggregate of perception, the aggregate of mental formations, and the aggregate of consciousness.

The Buddha said that when we are able to realise any of these five aggregates, we can cut through the cycle of dependent origination and get free from suffering. We are reborn because of actions performed in a previous existence and the attachment to that existence. Those actions are carried out because of grasping or a strong desire to be reborn. So, the actions performed and grasping arises dependent on attachment or *taṇhā*, desire. *Taṇhā*, desire or attachment, arises dependent on feeling. Here feeling can be classified in six ways—feeling that arises from eye consciousness, ear consciousness, tongue consciousness, nose consciousness, body consciousness, and mind consciousness. In other words, the consciousness of seeing visible things causes a feeling to arise and in the same way, the consciousness of hearing, of tasting, of smelling, of tangible things, and of mind objects causes feeling to arise.

Whatever the feeling is, it must be thoroughly realised. Unless this feeling is realised as it really is, the feeling causes attachment to arise. It conditions attachment, *taṇhā*, or desire. As you know *taṇhā*, attachment, is the second truth, the truth of the cause of suffering, *samudaya sacca*. All suffering is caused by this

attachment. Attachment is the immediate cause of all kinds of suffering in this and the following existences. The Buddha called *taṇhā* "*samudaya sacca*", *taṇhā* being the origin of suffering or the immediate cause of suffering. When we are attached to a living being or a non-living thing, it is sure we will have suffering because of attachment to that being or thing. So, if we are attached to our parents, our families, our sons and daughters, or our friends, that attachment is sure to give rise to suffering in regard to these living beings. When we are attached to our friend, we love him or her and have a strong attraction to him or her, but one day he or she dies of some illness or disease. Then we feel sadness or sorrow. Sometimes we have lamentation over the death of that friend. That sadness is *dukkha* or mental suffering, and if we grieve over the death of our friend for two or three months, we have physical suffering as well. So in this way, attachment causes suffering.

If we are attached to our meditation, that attachment creates a great deal of suffering, both mental and physical. When we are ambitious to make progress, we strive day and night but may not be able to improve our meditation as much as we want. We feel disappointed or sad at not being able to realise progress. Sometimes we are worried about our progress and sometimes we become desperate because we begin to think that our meditation is hopeless. This disappointment, sadness, worry, or desperation is the result or the effect of our attachment to our meditation. Even attachment to meditation is the cause of suffering, so it is called *samudaya sacca*. What should we do when we have attachment to our meditation?

Sometimes we are able to progress in meditation. Our concentration is deep, the insight is clear, and it penetrates into the impermanent, suffering, and selfless nature of mental states or physical processes which are observed. When we are happy and satisfied with our progress, we enjoy it and we may become attached to our good experiences in meditation. But this progress in meditation is also impermanent. One day, for some reason,

our concentration is broken. There are several thoughts and the mind goes here and there. We observe "thinking, thinking", but the more we note thinking, the stronger the thinking becomes. We feel sad and sometimes we feel like crying over the failure of our meditation and we also feel the loss of the good experiences we had yesterday or the day before yesterday. This mental suffering is caused by our attachment to these good experiences in meditation, and then this attachment, *taṇhā*, is a disadvantage for us. If there is feeling about any object, that feeling is sure to cause attachment to arise. [Except for an *arahant* who no longer has attachment.]

What should we do in order not to have attachment to our meditation, to any living being, to non-living things, or even to *dhamma*? When we realise that there is attachment to our progress in meditation, it must be observed as it is. Then we are able to realise the attachment as it is, noting it as "attachment, attachment, attachment" until it disappears.

But there is another way. Attachment arises dependent on feeling. So, if we are able to realise the impermanent, suffering, and selfless nature of this feeling, we won't have attachment because we realise the arising and passing away of feeling and being oppressed by its appearance and disappearance. Also, we realise that this is a process of mental and physical phenomena which is ever-changing and arising and passing away. If we are able to realise this feeling in this way—in other words, if we are able to realise the specific and general characteristics of this feeling—there won't arise any attachment at all.

In Buddhist scriptures, it is said that if you want to get off from this wheel of dependent origination, you should cut it off at the link of feeling. If you cut the attachment when it arises, you may be able to overcome it and eradicate it at that moment. But when there arises a feeling, then it will again cause attachment to arise. So what you should do is destroy the attachment to the feeling. It means that whenever you feel happiness or rapture about your progress in meditation, that feeling should be noted until

it has disappeared. When you are able to realise the appearance and disappearance of the feelings of happiness, no attachment will arise from this happiness. When you see this happiness as a natural part of the process of arising and passing away of phenomena, then you will have no attachment at all because you do not take this happiness to be a person who is happy about his or her progress in meditation. You do not take it to be a person or a meditator because happiness is neither a person nor a being, neither a meditator nor an ordinary person. It is an ever-changing process and that's all.

If you realise this happiness in this way, you won't have an idea of a happy "person" or a happy "meditator", a happy "me" or a happy "I". Then you will not be attached to your progress in meditation. Attachment is the cause of suffering and if attachment has been removed there will be no suffering arising at all. So, whatever you feel about your worldly affairs or your meditation, you should observe it. The feeling may be pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral. Though it is very rare to realise a neutral feeling because it is very subtle. In the scriptures, it is said that a neutral feeling is very subtle, so it should be regarded as pleasant feeling. So, a neutral feeling is difficult to observe and it is also a very rare occasion when we do experience a neutral feeling.

Most of the time, we have to observe pleasant and unpleasant feelings, *sukha vedanā* and *dukkha vedanā*. Even when we have an unpleasant feeling such as pain, stiffening, itching, or numbness, this can also cause attachment or desire to arise. Because when we feel pain, we want to have a pleasant feeling such as happiness and so on. Dependent on unpleasant feelings, we long for or desire pleasant feelings. When we are able to realise these painful feelings as an ever-changing arising and passing away of phenomena or as the experience of unpleasantness of a tangible thing, we realise that we don't have an idea of a "me" or "mine", a person or a being. We don't have the idea, "I have a painful feeling, my knee is aching, or my leg is numb". This idea of a person, a being, or a self can be removed by right understanding

of the painful feeling as just a natural process of feeling which is ever-changing and arising and passing away.

In this way, we are able to realise the feeling, *vedanā*, in two aspects—the specific characteristics and the general characteristics. Then we don't take this feeling, either a painful or a pleasant feeling, to be a person, a being, or a self. Then there won't arise any attachment at all, and when the attachment does not arise, there will arise no suffering and we will be free from suffering of dependent origination.

As you know, in the concluding passage of the sutta on *paṭicca samuppāda*, dependent origination, the Buddha said, "In this way, a big heap of suffering arises". The Buddha said that this wheel of dependent origination is a big heap of suffering. "*Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandassa samudayo hoti*".

Any link of *paṭicca samuppāda* or this train of dependent origination is suffering. The first link is *avijjā*: ignorance is suffering. The second is *saṅkhāra*: wholesome or unwholesome actions are suffering. The third is *viññāṇa*: consciousness beginning with the first consciousness of existence is suffering. Then *nāma* and *rūpa*: the processes of mental and physical phenomena are suffering. Then *salāyatana*: the six sense bases of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind are suffering. Then *phassa*: contact is suffering. Vedanā: feeling is suffering. *Taṇhā*: desire or attachment is suffering. *Upādāna*: grasping is suffering. *Bhava*: action is suffering. *Jāti*: rebirth is suffering. *Jarā*: ageing is suffering and *maraṇa*: death, is suffering. *Soka*: worry is suffering and *parideva*: lamentation, is suffering. *Dukkha*: pain or physical suffering is suffering. *Domanassa*: grief or mental suffering in any form, is suffering. *Upāyāsa*: despair is suffering. So, *paṭicca samuppāda* is suffering. The Buddha said that the wheel of this dependent origination is a mass of suffering.

If a person is not aware of these mental and physical phenomena, he or she is ignorant of the reality of mental and physical phenomena. He or she won't be able to rightly understand suffering. The person takes suffering to be a satisfactory process,

though the reality is not what he or she thinks. Reality is constituted of the ever-changing phenomena which arise and pass away constantly and instantly, so it is suffering. That's why the Buddha said that the truth of suffering must be thoroughly realised and rightly understood, *pariññeyya*. Then his disciples can realise reality as it is and strive their best to get rid of suffering. When you want to get rid of suffering, its cause must be destroyed.

The cause of suffering, *samudaya sacca*, is *taṇhā*. To remove or uproot this *taṇhā* or attachment, the cause, you need to rightly understand suffering as it is and to rightly understand all mental and physical phenomena. To rightly understand all mental states and physical phenomena as impermanent, unsatisfactory, and selfless in nature, your mind should be concentrated on any mental state or physical phenomenon that arises from moment to moment and see it as it is. To realise all mental states and physical processes you need some degree of concentration. To achieve this degree of deep concentration you need to acquire a sharp and powerful mindfulness of mental and physical phenomena. Only then are you able to be mindful of whatever arises in your body and mind as it really occurs. Your mindfulness becomes uninterrupted, constant, and deep. That's why in the scriptures it is said that the meditator should be *satata vihari*. *Satata* literally means "incessant" or "continuous", while *vihari* means "living with", thus "constant and continuous living with mindfulness". This means that meditators must have a constant and uninterrupted mindfulness so that they can acquire a degree of deep concentration that can give rise to clear insight into phenomena. To have this continuous, constant, and sharp mindfulness, you need strenuous effort. Without strenuous effort, your mindfulness cannot be constant, continuous, or sharp enough. Only strenuous effort which is called *padhāna* gives rise to constant and continuous mindfulness. If a meditator feels lazy, his or her mindfulness can never be continuous or sharp. Laziness is the enemy of strenuous effort.

Sometimes, though you have strenuous effort and sharp mind-

fulness, the mind does not stay with the object, either a mental state or a physical process. It goes out and wanders off or it thinks about something else. Then we need a mental factor to keep the mind on the object or to direct the noting mind to the object all the time. That mental factor is called *sammā sankappa* or right thought.

You may know that right understanding is *sammā diṭṭhi* or insight into phenomena and into their arising and passing away. Right concentration is *sammā samādhi*. Mindfulness of any mental state or physical process is *sammā sati*, right mindfulness. Effort, strenuous effort, is *sammā* vāyama, right effort. The mental factor that keeps the mind to the object is right thought, *sammā sankappa*.

These five factors of the Noble Eightfold Path are working together on the mental states and physical processes. The other three factors are helpful to these five factors—abstention from wrong speech, wrong deeds, and wrong livelihood. Abstaining from wrong speech is *sammā vācā*. Abstaining from wrong deeds or actions is *sammā kammanta*, and abstaining from wrong livelihood is *sammā ājīva*.

When we are mindful of any mental state or physical process with some degree of deep concentration, the mind is concentrated on each object one after another, continuously and incessantly. At that time we are abstaining from wrong speech, wrong deed, and wrong livelihood. (These factors are called the morality group, the group of *sīla*). Abstaining from these three wrongs, our deeds and speech are purified, and because morality is purified, our mind is clear, happy, and tranquil. This state of clarity and tranquillity is very conducive to our mind being concentrated on any mental state or physical phenomenon which is observed.

So there are five mental factors which are working together on the path that leads to the cessation of suffering. The other three factors help these five factors to make progress. Altogether eight factors are developed, so it is called the Noble Eightfold Path which leads to right understanding of *dukkha sacca* and

the realisation of mental states and physical phenomena. By the power of this Noble Eightfold Path we are able to realise the truth of suffering as it is, and as a result, we are not attached to any mental state or physical process. Attachment, the cause of suffering, *samudaya sacca*, has been removed. When the cause of suffering has been removed, no suffering will arise at all. Suffering ceases to exist and we live in peace and happiness. The cessation of suffering is *nirodha sacca*, or *Nibbāna*. That's why the Buddha said that we must develop the Noble Eightfold Path so as to realise *samudaya sacca*, remove attachment and experience the cessation of suffering, *nirodha sacca*, *Nibbāna*. Then we have broken the cycle of dependent origination. If we are able to attain the final stage of enlightenment, all mental defilements included in dependent origination are uprooted.

May all of you rightly understand how your mindfulness meditation, *magga sacca*, can lead you to realise the truth of suffering, *dukkha sacca*, eradicate attachment, *samudaya sacca*, and experience the cessation of suffering, *nirodha sacca*. May you strive your best to attain the cessation of suffering, *nirodha sacca*.

The Stages of Insight Knowledge

We should deal very briefly with how a meditator goes through all the thirteen stages of insight knowledge and attains enlightenment, so that the meditator knows his or her way to the cessation of suffering.

There are seven kinds of purification that a meditator has to go through in the course of his or her meditation, as well as the thirteen stages of insight knowledge and the four stages of enlightenment. The thirteen stages of insight knowledge are mundane, whereas the four stages of enlightenment are supramundane.

When a meditator is about to practise meditation, first of all he or she needs to purify morality. Purification of morality is the basic requirement for every meditator, either for *samatha* meditators or for *vipassanā* meditators. Only when morality is purified does the meditator have a clear conscience and is happy with his or her deeds and speech. This is very conducive for meditation and the insight knowledges that the meditator is to attain. To purify one's morality, one has to observe either five or eight precepts. For Buddhist monks there are the 227 rules of monastic code which are known as the *pāṭimokha saṃvarasīla*. For lay people at least five precepts should be observed and if it is possible, eight precepts should be observed. By observing the precepts meditators perform wholesome deeds and speech and morality is purified.

Then the meditator may begin to practise *vipassanā* or insight meditation by being mindful of whatever is arising in the body and mind as it really occurs. When mindfulness becomes sharp and powerful, concentration gradually becomes deeper and thoughts lessen. When the mind is well concentrated on any mental state or physical process, then the five kinds of hindrances, *pañcanīvaraṇa*, gradually become weaker. With deep concentration, none of the hindrances can enter the mind. The concentrated mind expels all of the hindrances for the time being, that is, for as long as the mind is well concentrated on the object of meditation. This state is called purification of mind because the mind is well absorbed into the object. There may be some thoughts, but the meditator realises and notes any thought quickly and it passes away. In this way, the concentration gets deeper and deeper and the mind becomes purified from hindrances and defilements. This is called purification of mind, *citta visuddhi*. The first stage of purification, purification of morality, is called *sīla visuddhi*.

Purified from hindrances and from defilements, the concentrated mind becomes penetrating and sharp, so it begins to realise *nāma* and *rūpa*, mental phenomena and physical phenomena. It begins to differentiate between mentality and physicality, that is between the noting mind and the object or between the subject and object. When the meditator's mind is well concentrated on the rising and falling movement of the abdomen, he or she comes to differentiate between the process of the rising movement and the process of the falling movement. At the beginning of the practice, when the mind is not well concentrated, the meditator cannot differentiate between the rising and the falling. He or she thinks that the rising and falling movement are one and the same.

When concentration is deep enough, the meditator comes to realise that the abdomen rises and then disappears. Then immediately after it has disappeared, the abdomen falls and then it disappears. In this way, the beginning and the end of the rising process and the beginning and the end of the falling process is perceived very clearly, so the meditator comes to realise that the

rising and falling processes are different processes. At this stage of meditation, he or she realises the noting mind and the rising movement and the noting mind and the falling movement. He or she comes to realise that the rising movement is one process and the noting mind is another process, that the falling movement is one process and the noting mind another. In this way, he or she comes to differentiate between the processes of the rising and falling movements, physical phenomena, from the process of the noting mind, a mental phenomenon. When concentration becomes deeper, the meditator comes to realise the specific or individual characteristics of the rising movement and of the falling movement and the individual characteristics of the noting mind.

I have explained to you how the meditator realises the specific or individual characteristics of *vāyodhātu*, the air element, which is obvious in the rising and falling movement. This stage of insight knowledge is called *nāmarūpa pariccheda ñāṇa* or the insight knowledge discerning *nāma* and *rūpa*, mental phenomena and physical phenomena. In the same way, when you observe a painful sensation, the mind gradually becomes more and more concentrated on the pain. You are patient with the pain and continue to observe it more attentively and the more you do so, the deeper concentration becomes. Then you come to realise that the pain is one process and the mind that notes the pain is another process.

Here the meditators can differentiate between the two types of *nāma*—one is the noting mind and the other is the unpleasant feeling. Then they come to realise that the pain is just an unpleasant feeling. Sometimes they realise the pain as separate from their body or as being outside their body. Sometimes they are not aware of the location of the pain and sometimes they are not aware of their whole body or person. At that moment they realise that the pain is just an unpleasant feeling. The mind that notes the pain is also seen as a separate process. Then again they come to realise that the pain is neither a person nor a being but just an unpleasant feeling. This stage of insight knowledge is called

nāmarūpa pariccheda ñāṇa, the insight knowledge of discerning *nāma* and *rūpa* or the insight knowledge of differentiating between *nāma* and *rūpa*.

In the same way, when you are mindful of daily activities by noting actions very attentively, carefully, and precisely, the mind gets gradually concentrated on each movement or action. Suppose you observe the bending or stretching of the arm and you follow it very precisely and closely. Then you come to realise that this is just a process of movement, neither a person nor a being. Sometimes you lose the sense of the arm and what you realise is just a natural process of movement which is the air element, *vāyodhātu*. So you don't identify it with a person, a being, a self, me, or mine. In this way, the realisation of *vāyodhātu*, being a physical phenomenon and manifested as a stretching movement, destroys the view of a person or a being, *sakkāya diṭṭthi*.

This realisation is the insight knowledge of discerning *nāma* and *rūpa*. In the same way, when you walk, your concentration on the movement of the foot gradually becomes deeper and deeper and you come to perceive the actual movement of lifting, pushing, or dropping very well. With deeper concentration, you are not conscious of the shape of the foot. What you are realising is just movement. Then you do not identify that movement with yourself, a person, or a being. That realisation of the lifting, pushing, and dropping movement removes the view of a person, a self, or a soul, *sakkāya diṭṭthi, atta diṭṭthi*. This also belongs to the insight knowledge discerning *nāma* and *rūpa*.

When the meditator continues his or her practice with strenuous effort, enthusiastically and ardently, by observing each mental state or physical process attentively, then concentration becomes deeper and deeper. At this stage you have to observe some intentions before some movements in the daily activities and also in the walking such as "intention, lifting", "intention, pushing", "intention, dropping", "touching", "intention, pressing", and so on. Then you find the intention very clearly and see it separate from the movement. For example, the intention to lift is one thing

and the lifting movement is another and the intention to push forward is one thing and the pushing movement is another.

Then you come to realise that only when intention arises, is the foot lifted, only when intention arises, is the foot pushed forward and only when intention arises, does the foot drop down. In the same way, at this stage of insight knowledge when you note the intention before the movement, you feel that you do not have to make any effort to lift the foot; the foot is lifted by itself. In the same way, when you note the intention, the foot is pushed forward by itself. Sometimes the foot is pushed forward and you can't control it. When you note the intention, then the foot drops by itself. At first you are surprised at your experience because previously you have had to put some effort into lifting the foot, pushing it forward, and dropping it down. Now without your effort, as soon as the intention arises, the foot is lifted by itself. In the same way, as soon as the intention is noted, the foot is pushed forward by itself. It means that at that moment you do not identify the intention or movement of the foot with a person, a being, or yourself. You are just realising the two processes, intention and movement, as separate processes. Then you come to judge that it is intention that causes the lifting of the foot. So intention is the cause and the lifting movement is the effect. In the same way, you come to realise that intention is the cause and the pushing movement is the effect. Intention is the cause and the dropping movement is the effect. This is called "the insight knowledge of cause and effect", or "the insight knowledge of conditionality".

In the same way, you observe the intentions before actions or movements in daily activities. You note them as "intending, sitting down, sitting down, sitting down", "intending, rising from the seat", and so on. There also, when your concentration is good enough, you come to realise that it is intention that causes the action. You come to realise cause and effect, causal relation, or conditionality. This is called the insight knowledge of causal

relations or the insight knowledge of conditionality, *paccaya pariggaha ñāṇa*.

At this stage, you may come to realise that sometimes your rising or falling movement is very distinct and you can note it very well and very clearly. But sometimes the rising and falling disappears and you can't note it because you can't find it. At that moment you become puzzled. What should you note? Later on, you come to hear the sound of a voice and note it as "hearing, hearing", and then you come to know that your mind is thinking about the disappearance of the rising and falling and note it as "thinking, thinking, thinking". After you have noted the thought process, you may find the rising and falling again. It has appeared again and you note it as "rising", "falling", "rising", "falling". Here you vaguely come to realise that only when we have the rising movement can we note it as "rising", and only when we have the falling movement can we note it as "falling". It means that when there is the object of the rising movement or the falling movement, there arises the mind that notes it. So the object of the rising or falling movement is the cause and the noting mind is the effect. In this way, we come to realise causal relations or conditionality, *paccaya pariggaha ñāṇa*.

When you proceed with your practice, your concentration becomes deeper. When you come to have some painful sensation, you note it as "pain, pain, pain". At the first and second insight knowledge you could not observe this painful sensation very well. Now when the painful sensation becomes very distinct, your concentration is deeper because you have already gone through two stages of insight. So you observe the pain by being patient with it and noting it as "pain, pain, pain". But your mind also goes out and mental pictures appear such as flowers, trees, human beings, ghosts, devas, or monks. Any mental image arising in your mind is created by your thought. You think that these mental images come into your mind of their own accord, but actually it is not so. When the mind goes out, that thought brings these mental images into the mind. Because you see them, you have to

note them as "seeing, seeing" until they have disappeared. If you realise the thought before it creates these mental pictures, then you note it as "wandering wandering" or "thinking, thinking" until that thought has disappeared. After it has disappeared, you return to the primary object of rising and falling. Or when you feel pain, note it as "pain, pain", and so on.

So you have to observe the pain with great patience, you have to be mindful of the pain attentively. Sometimes the pain gradually decreases and after some time, the pain disappears. Here you come to realise the beginning, the middle, and the end of the pain. Sometimes it happens that before one painful sensation has disappeared, another painful sensation arises. At that time, you have to note the pain which is more dominant. Later on, with deeper and deeper concentration, the painful sensation disappears, when it is noted attentively. Here you come to realise the arising of the pain and its disappearance or the arising of the itching sensation and its disappearance. In this way, you come to judge that though the pain arises and becomes more severe it eventually passes away. So it is impermanent.

In the same way, when you observe the rising and falling movement of the abdomen, you come to realise two or three movements in the process of rising, "rising, rising, rising". And also in the process of falling you realise that there are two or three movements, "falling, falling, falling". So you come to realise that the rising and falling movements are not one and the same. The rising movement is not a single process but one composed of three or four movements. In the same way, when you observe the movement of the foot in walking meditation, you come to realise that in the lifting there are about two or three movements, "lifting, lifting, lifting". When you observe the pushing movement, you realise there are two or three movements of pushing, "pushing, pushing, pushing", and so on. Though only vaguely here you realise that the movements are not permanent because one movement after another arises and passes away.

At this stage of insight knowledge, you come to realise that

each object you note has a beginning, middle, and final phase. You come to clearly realise the disappearance of the object, either a mental state or a physical process. You come to realise the impermanent, unsatisfactoriness, and selfless nature of mental and physical phenomena. This is called the insight knowledge of comprehension, sammasana *ñāṇa*, meaning the insight knowledge that comprehends all three characteristics of phenomena, *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā*.

With deeper concentration, you proceed with your practice and gradually painful sensations subside and decrease. You have little pain and your concentration becomes better and deeper. Your mindfulness is also sharp and powerful and your effort is also consistent and strong enough. Then at this stage of insight knowledge the mind is more deeply concentrated on any arising mental state or physical process. When the mind is concentrated, rapture arises and you feel tranquil. You are happy because the mind is concentrated on the mental state or physical process being observed. The mind becomes clearer and clearer. We can say the mind becomes, as it were, transparent. Then we see some kinds of light which are associated with insight—sometimes it looks like fluorescent light or car headlights, or it looks like the stars or the radiance of the moon. Sometimes when you are sitting and practising meditation, you feel bathed by the beams of the moon and so on. In this way, when you see the light, you note it as "seeing, seeing, seeing" and when you feel happy, you note it as "happy, happy, happy". When you feel tranquil, you note it as "tranquil, tranquil, tranquil" and when you feel rapture, you note it as "rapture, rapture, rapture", and so on. You feel very subtle and sublime happiness, rapture, and thrilling sensations at this stage of insight knowledge. Your mindfulness is also very good and is ready to observe any object arising. Energy is strong and consistent.

Then you are happy with this experience at this stage and you become attached to these good experiences. That attachment is called nikanti, though it is not a strong attachment. It is a

sublime, subtle, and weak attachment that you experience at this stage. You also feel equanimity and you don't need to put in any effort to observe or realise the nature of mental states or physical processes. It is as if your noting mind is effortless, neither tense nor lax. This state of equanimity is very clearly felt and you are attached to this equanimity. Whenever you have this attachment, you should note it as "attachment, attachment, attachment" until that attachment has disappeared. Sometimes this stage of insight knowledge is very attractive because the experience in this stage is very enjoyable. So meditators sometimes think that they have attained *Nibbāna.* Then they enjoy it and they are attached to it so they are not able to observe phenomena. Sometimes they may even forget to note.

With the knowledge of *dhamma* or the instruction given by the teacher, the meditator comes to realise that this is not the final goal of meditation and that these are the corruptions of insight meditation. The meditator reflects, "Unless I am able to note attachment, I won't be able to proceed with the higher stages of insight". Rightly understanding it in this way, you have to note whatever attachment you may have to happiness or rapture. Then you pass through this stage and your mind becomes stable, calm, and tranquil. Concentration becomes better and insight becomes sharper and more penetrating and it realises the rising and falling movement very clearly, one movement after another. Sometimes you come to realise a series of movements in the process of rising and falling, arising and passing away one after another. In this same way, in the walking meditation you come to realise a series of tiny broken movements which are separate movements of the foot. At that time you are not aware of the shape or form of the foot. What you realise is just a series of movements as arising and passing away, one after another. Here you come to realise the arising and passing away of physical phenomena. In the same way, you come to realise that the mind notes one object and ceases, then it notes another object and ceases, and so on.

Early in this stage, you experience the ten corruptions of

insight such as lights, rapture, happiness, tranquillity, equanimity, and so on. Later you come to clearly see the arising and passing away of mental and physical phenomena. The fourth insight knowledge is called *uddayabhaya ñāṇa*, the insight knowledge of arising and passing away.

Then you proceed with your practice and concentration becomes stronger and stronger. Mindfulness is also very sharp and powerful. Then you come to realise the disappearance of each individual rising and falling movement, and in the same way you realise the disappearance of the noting mind. You note one object; the mind notes it and it disappears. Whatever you note, it disappears. In this way, you come to realise the dissolution of the object very quickly, rapidly, and clearly. What you are realising is dissolution, vanishing, or disappearance. Most of the time you have lost the form or the shape of the object and sometimes you are very dissatisfied with your experience because you do not find the shape or form of the phenomena. Sometimes you have lost the physical form and what is left is just consciousness. Then you have to note it as "knowing, knowing, knowing", but that consciousness also arises and vanishes. This is called the insight knowledge of dissolution, *bhaṅga ñāṇa*, the fifth stage of insight knowledge.

After that you have to observe mostly the disappearance and dissolution of the object. So you feel that these things are fearful because they are always and instantly "vanishing, vanishing", "disappearing, disappearing", and so on. That feeling of fear or that awareness of fearfulness is called *bhaya ñāṇa*, the insight knowledge of fearfulness.

Because you constantly experience the vanishing or dissolving of phenomena, you feel that they are not good and you are not satisfied with this state. You feel that these things are miserable. Your mind is not bright and active but becomes reluctant and you feel dismay. This is called the insight knowledge of misery, *adinava ñāṇa*.

Then you feel weariness, disgust, or boredom in regard to

these mental and physical phenomena. You also feel weary with your life and the world. You can not find any place where you could live happily and comfortably. Sometimes you feel like leaving the retreat and run away. Sometimes you want to throw yourself into the sea or into a ravine because you do not find anything that is satisfying in the world. This is called the insight knowledge of disgust, *nibbida ñāṇa*.

When you experience the disappearance of these mental and physical phenomena, you find fault with them and you want to get rid of them. You feel a desire to be liberated from these mental and physical phenomena that are always vanishing. At this stage of insight, though, you have good experiences, deep concentration, and sharp mindfulness. But you cannot sit for any length of time. You may sit about fifteen minutes, then you want to change your posture or you want to get up and practise walking meditation. In the walking meditation, you can't stay long, say about twenty minutes or so, and then you want to sit again, and so on. That means you are not satisfied with the experience of this disappearance and vanishing of phenomena. You want to get rid of it. This is called *muccitukamyatā ñāṇa*, the insight knowledge of desire for deliverance.

When you proceed with your practice, you have many varieties of painful sensation again. The painful sensation arises very severely, it is very strong, and you have to make some effort to observe it. Sometimes you can't bear it and you want to change your posture or to get up. You should not change or get up, but observe the pain with persistence and with perseverance. Later on the pain disappears abruptly or suddenly. Another pain comes and you note it and it disappears instantly and again another pain comes and you note it and it disappears instantly, and so on. At this stage you have to review the impermanent, unsatisfactory, and selfless nature of mental and physical phenomena which you experienced at the third stage of insight knowledge of comprehension. Now you have to re-observe it, re-note it, re-contemplate on it so that you come to realise that these men-

tal states and physical processes are actually not everlasting or permanent. They arise, then instantly pass away. This stage is called the insight knowledge of re-observation, *paṭisankha ñāṇa*.

After this stage you come to the best stage of insight knowledge where you have sometimes no pain at all. There may be a little pain but your mindfulness is very sharp and concentration is deep. Mindfulness is strong and consistent by itself so that you need not put forth any effort to observe an object. The mind observes phenomena by itself. Whatever the object may be, you note it. Then you come to realise that it has disappeared. This arising and passing away of an object which can be a mental or physical process now becomes very rapid. Sometimes you have to look at it without labelling it or noting it but just observing it, perceiving the arising and passing away of phenomena. Here your concentration is very deep. Sometimes some meditators send out their minds to an external object but the mind doesn't go to the object. It is like an elastic band and springs back to the object, that is to whatever mental state or physical process is being observed. At this stage you feel neither happy nor unhappy. Even though you find an object which is pleasant and inviting, you are not attached to it. You are not happy with it but what you do is just observing it and then that object disappears. So, in this way your mind is centred between happiness and unhappiness. This is called the insight knowledge of equanimity or *saṅkharupekkhā ñāṇa*.

When this knowledge becomes mature, you come to attain the insight knowledge of adaptation and maturity, *anuloma ñāṇa* and *gotrabhu ñāṇa*. Then you attain the path knowledge. At that moment you realise that you are devoid of suffering. This is the attainment of the first path knowledge, *sotāpattimagga ñāṇa*, the enlightenment of stream-entry. That enlightenment uproots the wrong view of personality, *sakkāya diṭṭhi*, individuality, self, or soul, and the wrong view of attachment to rites and rituals, *sīlabbatta parāmāsa*. That enlightenment also uproots sceptical doubt about the Triple Gem. Because this sceptical doubt has been

uprooted by the first stage of enlightenment, your faith, *saddhā*, is firm and strong and can never be shaken by any doctrine or anybody because you have experienced the insight knowledges and experienced the Four Noble Truths. This is called stream-entry knowledge, or the first stage of enlightenment, *sotāpattimagga ñāṇa*.

When you proceed with your practice, you may be able to obtain the higher stages of enlightenment. When you have attained the second stage of enlightenment, *sakadāgāmīmagga*, you become a once-returner. This means that once you have attained the second stage of enlightenment, you will be reborn in a higher world such as the Brahma world or the deva world, but you may come back only once more to the sensuous world, kāma existence. That second stage of enlightenment weakens sensuous desire or craving and ill-will, *kāmarāga* and *dosa*. When you have attained the third stage of enlightenment, *anāgāmīmagga*, and become a non-returner, you will never again come back to this sensuous existence. This third stage of enlightenment uproots sensuous desire, craving, and ill-will completely, *kāmarāga* and *dosa*. When you attain the final stage of enlightenment, *arahattamagga*, all mental defilements are completely uprooted, eradicated, and eliminated by this final stage of enlightenment. Then you become an *arahant* and your mind is completely purified from all mental defilements, hindrances, and negative mental states, so you live at peace and in happiness. This is the final goal of a meditator.

At least you should aim at the attainment of the first stage of enlightenment, *sotāpattimagga ñāṇa*. With that stage of enlightenment in mind, you should strive your best, but you need enough effort and enough time. Ten days meditation, two weeks meditation, or three weeks meditation is not enough time to attain at least the lowest stage of enlightenment. When your insight knowledge becomes mature, you have to stop and go back home. Then again you come to another ten-day retreat or two-week retreat and you start from the beginning and progress gradually. When the concentration is deep enough, you have some experi-

ences and gain some insight knowledge, then again you have to stop and return home. So you need enough effort and enough time for the attainment of these four stages of enlightenment, or at least for the lowest stage of enlightenment.

I have very briefly explained to you the thirteen stages of insight knowledge and the four stages of enlightenment. You may find that some of the experiences you had in your meditation are in conformity with the points I have mentioned in this discourse, so then you can know where you are. You have to proceed with your practice for a long journey.

May you all strive your best and attain the final stage of enlightenment, *arahantship*.

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The venerable Chanmyay Sayadaw U Janakābhivaṃsa, born 24 July 1928, is a Theravada Buddhist monk from Myanmar.

He was born in Pyinma village, Taungdwingyi Township, British Burma, on Tuesday, 24 July 1928. His parents were U Phyu Min and Daw Shwe Yee. He started to study the Buddhist scriptures at the age of fifteen as a novice monk. He received the higher upasampada ordination in 1947 and continued advanced studies of Buddhist scriptures. He practised Vipassana meditation under the instruction of the most Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw from 1953 to 1954. He was then invited by the State Buddha Sasana Organization to be an editor of the Buddhist scriptures in Pali for reciting Buddhist scriptures at the Sixth Buddhist Council in Myanmar.

Starting from 1957, the Venerable Sayadaw spent six years in Colombo, Sri Lanka, where he continued his studies of English, Sanskrit, Hindi and Sinhalese languages. He returned to Myanmar in June 1963. At the invitation of the state Buddha Sasana Organisation, he took up residence at Kaba-Aye where he edited the publications of Pali Texts.

In 1967, he was appointed by the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw as a meditation teacher at Mahasi Sasana Yeiktha, Yangon. In 1977 Sayadaw Ashin Janakabhivamsa took up residence at Chanmyay Yeiktha Meditation Center which was donated to him by some devotees and became the abbot of the center. He has been since then well known as Chanmyay Sayadaw.

In 1979–1980 Chanmyay Sayadaw accompanied the Most Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw's Dhamma Mission to Europe and the U.S.A. He has undertaken many Dhamma missions to countries in Asia, Europe, and the United States. As recently as July 2015, at the age of 87, he travelled to the UK, Ireland, and Canada giving Dhamma Talks.